Cote d'Ivoire

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In October 2000, Laurent Gbagbo became the country's third elected president, ending an almost 10-month period of military rule. The election, which excluded two of the major parties, was marred by significant violence and irregularities. The Supreme Court declared Gbagbo the victor with 53 percent of the vote. He remained in power despite a January 2001 coup attempt. In July 2000, citizens overwhelmingly approved a Constitutional referendum implemented in August 2000. The December 2000 elections for the National Assembly also were marred by violence, irregularities, a Republican Rally (RDR) boycott, and a very low participation rate. In implementing resolutions from the December 2001 Forum of National Reconciliation, in August President Gbagbo formed a government of National Unity. While all major political parties were represented in the new government, the leadership of the RDR, the party of rival presidential candidate and former Prime Minister Alassane Ouattara, called for the resignation of its Ministers, citing the harassment and detention of its members and others by security forces. The judiciary lacked transparency and was subject to executive branch and other outside influence.

On September 19, rebellious exiled military members resident in Burkina Faso and co-conspirators in Abidjan attacked the homes of key government ministers as well as government and military/security facilities in Abidjan, Bouake, and Korhogo. In Abidjan government military and security forces stopped the coup attempt within hours, but the attacks, which targeted the elimination of key security leaders, resulted in the deaths of Minister of Interior Boga Dougou and several high-ranking military officers. There was widespread suspicion, fostered by the Government and others, that the RDR party of Alassane Ouattara and/or former-junta leader, General Robert Guei, were instrumental in the attempted coup. General Guei also was killed under unclear circumstances, although it is widely believed that police forces killed him. The failed coup attempt and ongoing rebellion quickly escalated into the country's worst crisis since independence in 1960. Rebel forces retained control in Bouake and Korhogo, and within 2 weeks moved to take the remainder of the northern half of the country. The number of civilian deaths throughout the country remained unknown, but reliable estimates were 1,150 or more. In early October, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) brokered a ceasefire, with French troops monitoring compliance. ECOWAS peace negotiations were stalled at year's end. ECOWAS continued to prepare for a peace monitoring mission. There were no ECOWAS troops in place by year's end.

Security forces under the Ministries of Defense and Interior included the army, navy, air force, Republican Guard, Presidential security force, and the Gendarmerie, a branch of the armed forces with responsibility for general law enforcement. The police forces were under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Interior. These forces include paramilitary rapid intervention units such as the Anti-Riot Brigade (BAE) and the Republican Security Company, and the plain-clothes police investigating unit, Directorate for Territorial Security (DST). A central security staff collected and distributed information about crime and coordinated the activities of the security forces. In February 2001, the Government dissolved the Presidential Investigation Cell (CCER), a special police service that had operated out of the Presidency under the regime of General Guei. Members of the military participated in seminars on human rights. The Government did not always maintain effective control of the security forces. There were numerous credible reports of instances in which security forces acted independently of government authority. There were major divisions within the military based on ethnic, religious, and political loyalties. Security and rebel forces committed numerous human rights abuses.

The country, which had a population of 16 million, was generally poor but had a historically thriving modern sector. The largely market-based economy was heavily dependent on the commercial agricultural sector of smallholder cash crop production, especially cocoa and coffee, which with tropical fruits, wood, and petroleum products made up the bulk of exports. After assuming power, the Gbagbo Government began repaying international arrears and adhering to a balanced budget, steps that led to the resumption of foreign aid; however, widespread corruption and the lack of an accountable executive and judicial branch deterred investors. The September 19 rebellion impeded

commerce and severely affected the economy as the division of the country created uncertainty and rendered commerce difficult.

Although the Government improved in a number of areas before September 19, serious problems continued and some worsened. Since the September 19 rebellion, both the Government and the rebel forces have committed serious human rights abuses. Members of the security forces committed more than 200 extrajudicial killings during the year, and there were several cases of evident disappearances. Local and international human rights groups and the international and some local press reported the existence of death squads close to top government officials that targeted opposition figures; top government officials denied their existence. Several mass graves were discovered following the September 19 rebellion. Security forces frequently resorted to lethal force to combat widespread violent crime and sometimes beat detainees and prisoners. The Government generally failed to bring perpetrators of most abuses to justice. Prison conditions improved but remained harsh and sometimes life threatening. The Government continued arbitrary arrests and detention; numerous persons, including opposition members, journalists, and military officers, were detained for long periods without trial. The judiciary did not ensure due process. Police harassment and abuse of noncitizen African immigrants increased after September 19. Privacy rights were restricted severely after September 19. The Government restricted freedom of speech, assembly, movement, and press, and after September 19 used state-owned media to create an atmosphere of patriotism and nationalism. The Government generally respected freedom of association although some restrictions remained in practice. The Government also generally respected freedom of religion, although Muslims and practitioners of indigenous religions were subject to discrimination. The Government allowed investigations into the human rights situation by Amnesty International (AI), Human Rights Watch (HRW), and reporters from the U.N. Commission for Human Rights (UNCHR). Discrimination and violence against women, abuse of children, and female genital mutilation (FGM) remained serious problems. There were incidents of violent ethnic confrontation; societal discrimination based on ethnicity remained a problem. Child labor as well as some forced child labor and trafficking in children and women also persisted. Cote d'Ivoire was invited by the Community of Democracies' (CD) Convening Group to attend the November 2002 second CD Ministerial Meeting in Seoul, Republic of Korea, as an observer.

The Gbagbo Government organized a well-attended 10-week Forum of National Reconciliation, which ended in December 2001; the Forum resulted in 14 resolutions to be considered by the President and the legislature. These resolutions covered a broad spectrum of issues, including four primary ones: Resolution 1 that the revised Constitution and presidential elections of 2000 be upheld; Resolution 4 that Alassane Quattara's citizenship should be recognized by judicial action; Resolution 9 that all coup d'etats should be condemned; and Resolution 10 that the Government should issue general amnesty for all those responsible for the violence related to the coup d'etat. Former President Bedie, former Prime Minister Quattara, and former junta leader Guei, who had left Abidjan in self-imposed exile in 2000, all returned to the country to participate in the Forum. On December 18, 2001, President Gbagbo closed the Forum and promised to continue the reconciliation process through ongoing negotiations with the other three recognized political leaders. The Government slowly began to work on implementing the resolutions of the Forum during the year. In August President Gbagbo expanded his cabinet to include ministerial portfolios for all major parties, including the RDR. Members of the military participated in seminars on human rights. The local press remained lively. President Gbagbo spoke with Muslim leaders about their concerns. The Government cooperated with international investigations into child labor on cocoa farms.

The rebels' human rights record also was extremely poor. The rebels in Bouake and elsewhere in the north killed numerous persons, including civilians and executed approximately 100 gendarmes, who were buried in a mass grave. Mass graves of gendarmes and civilians killed by rebels were discovered near the western town of Man. The rebels arbitrarily arrested and detained persons and conducted arbitrary ad hoc justice. In Bouake they took over the national television station and aired mostly their leaders' speeches and deliberations. The rebels severely limited freedom of movement within and from the territory they held and forcibly conscripted persons into their ranks. In late November, rebel groups took key cities in the northwestern region of the country in evident coordination with the rebel group that held the north. There were credible reports of the rebels abusing the local population, including slitting the throats or disemboweling local inhabitants, gang raping women, chopping off limbs, and throwing persons into wells to drown. There were no confirmed figures of the actual number of civilians killed, detained, or harassed in the north or in the west.

RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Section 1 Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom From:

a. Arbitrary or Unlawful Deprivation of Life

Security forces reportedly committed more than 200 extrajudicial killings, some of which were believed to have

been politically and ethnically motivated. There were credible but unconfirmed reports that government-linked death squads committed and condoned extrajudicial killings. Security forces frequently resorted to lethal force to combat widespread crime. The September 19 rebellion resulted in the killings of approximately 300 persons, most of whom were government uniformed forces or uniformed forces that sided with the rebels. There also were numerous civilian casualties.

There were numerous political killings by both security forces and rebels during the failed coup attempt of September 19 and subsequent rebellion. The rebels targeted and killed several leading government military officers and the civilian Interior Minister Emile Boga Doudou; they also attempted to kill Moise Lida Kouassi, the civilian Defense Minister. The rebels also killed Colonel Yode, Director of the Army Engineers in Abidjan; Dally Oble, Commander in Korhogo; and Dago Loula, Commander in Bouake.

Under unclear circumstances, former military junta leader General Robert Guei, his wife Rose, a son, his aide-de-camp Captain Fabien Coulibaly, several army guards, and others reportedly were shot to death at Guei's Abidjan residence. AI concluded that the deaths of Guei and his family were extrajudicial killings.

On September 20, members of the security forces reportedly kidnaped, shot, and killed Commander Aboubacar Dosso, aide-de-camp to RDR leader Alassane Ouattara, when he returned to the site of Ouattara's house, which had been burned and looted the previous day. Dosso reportedly was killed because he refused to sign a declaration implicating Ouattara in the rebellion.

On October 11, gendarmes arrested Adama Cisse, the head of the RDR party in the eastern town of M'Bahiakro, who died the following day from injuries he received while in custody. The gendarmes reportedly were searching for Ibrahima Fanny, the RDR mayor of Bouake, and for weapons.

On October 18, members of the security forces reportedly shot and killed Seydou Coulibaly and Zanzeni Coulibaly, both related to RDR Secretary General Amadou Gon Coulibaly, at the Abidjan funeral of another Coulibaly family member.

On November 2, the body of Emile Tehe, president of the independent Popular Movement Party (MPI), was found in Abidjan; the MPI was allied with the RDR.

On November 8, the body of medical doctor Benoit Dakoury-Tabley was found after he had been kidnaped the previous day; Dakoury-Tabley was the brother of Louis Dakoury-Tabley, one of the political leaders of the rebel Patriotic Movement of Cote d'Ivoire (MPCI). Louis Dakoury-Tabley was a ranking official in the ruling Ivoirian Popular Front (FPI) party.

In a televised speech on November 8, Human Rights Minister Victorine Wodie vowed that the Government would investigate the death of Dakoury-Tabley and others. Wodie called for an international study on human rights violations throughout the country since September 19 and was pursuing the case at year's end.

Following the September 19 rebellion, the military and security forces conducted reprisal killings against presumed rebel sympathizers. In October security forces killed more than 100 noncombatants in Daloa in evident reprisal against northerners living in the town, according to numerous credible reports; they also killed persons suspected of assisting the rebels. Uniformed forces took from their homes individuals of northern descent or foreign Africans (generally called Dioulas); their bodies were found in the streets the following day. A Muslim cleric, Gaoussou Sylla, was arrested at home with five other persons, including the Malian honorary consul, Malian merchants, and the Burkinabe owner of a transport company. The bodies of Sylla and the other five subsequently were found along a road out of town; the businesses of the victims were damaged and looted.

On October 28, uniformed forces also killed a number of Guineans in Daloa. Hundreds of Daloa residents took shelter in a mosque while government forces ransacked and burned their homes. The Governments of Mali, Burkina Faso, and Guinea lodged formal protests with the Government over the deaths in Daloa and the harassment and abuse of northerners in Abidjan and other cities.

After the Daloa killings, the military command and the state-owned media warned of men "wearing fatigues" who were extorting, mistreating, and killing persons. The Government criticized such actions as flagrant violations of human rights and denied that government forces were responsible. On October 25, the Government announced an investigation into the killings to discover who was impersonating the country's security forces. AI and the international press reported that security forces were responsible for the killings in Daloa. Multiple eyewitnesses saw the men who carried out the killings arrive in military vehicles, notably of the BAE. AI noted that military

authorities stopped the killings after 3 days when pressed by Muslim leaders who underscored the responsibility of government authorities to ensure that security forces protected civilians and prevented harassment, especially of foreigners.

Following the coup attempt, there were numerous reports of militias or death squads with "hit lists" of rebel sympathizers operating within the military or composed of private citizens. On November 25, the Ivoirian Human Rights Movement (MIDH) reported that death squads operating under cover of the curfew had arrested, kidnaped, and killed approximately 50 political party members and citizens. The same day, the Ivoirian Human Rights League (LIDHO) issued a statement that "death squads of unknown persons are sowing terror."

In response to criticism from national and international NGOs, the Government's military spokesman stated that the Government had opened judicial inquiries into the killings.

In Abidjan police and security forces in search of rebel sympathizers, infiltrators, and arms caches used lethal force in neighborhood sweeps against citizens with northern origins and African immigrants. For example, on October 7, gendarmes demanded money and identity cards from three Burkinabe citizens and then shot them; two died instantly, and the other died the following day. Also in October, gendarmes killed 10 Liberians applying for work reportedly because they were Anglophone and therefore suspect.

In an October 28 report, AI referred to the October 2000 Yopougon massacre and appealed to the Government and rebels to refrain from attacking persons because of their ethnic origins or presumed political sympathies. In 2001 the Government brought eight gendarmes to trial for the Yopougon massacre, but they were acquitted. Most citizens and international observers did not see this as a just outcome. There were no reported apprehensions of suspects in other cases.

In the months following the coup attempt, mass graves were discovered in the areas controlled by both the Government and the rebels. International human rights groups and the press blamed government forces for the killings and mass graves at Daloa and at the nearby village of Monoko-Zohi. It was unclear who was responsible for the mass grave at Vavoua, given that both government and rebel forces had access to the area. After the outbreak of fighting in the west in late November, numerous credible sources reported the existence of three mass graves of gendarmes and civilians killed by rebels near the western town of Man. Local and international human rights groups and some political parties called for international investigations of these sites. In October authorities in Abidjan buried 72 unidentified bodies that government media stated were unclaimed bodies from the September 19 coup attempt.

In the months prior to September 19, there were credible reports of more than 30 cases in which security forces used excessive force that resulted in death; such cases often occurred when security forces apprehended suspects or tried to extort taxi drivers and merchants. For example, on March 12, police in Abidjan shot and killed Lemorifing Bamba, a taxi driver, for refusing to stop at a checkpoint and refusing to pay bribes; the Government ordered an investigation and compensated Bamba's family. In March police arrested for alleged theft Adama Sylla, who subsequently died from injuries sustained in police custody. On June 7, in the Deux Plateaux neighborhood, police killed seven men suspected of rape, theft, and money laundering.

Several foreigners were victims of police killings in ambiguous cases. In January police killed a Burkinabe, Belam Issiaka, suspected of leading a criminal gang. He reportedly was shot while attempting to flee. On May 4, a 22-year-old Nigerian, Franck Oyeminke, died after the police shot him eight times during a neighborhood search; the case was being investigated at year's end.

In the period prior to the July departmental elections, clashes between RDR supporters and FPI supporter resulted in deaths (see Sections 2.c. and 5).

The following cases from 2001 remained outstanding at year's end: The April shooting by a police sergeant of a student traveling in a car; and the December killing of Togolese electrician Dokli Kodjo by two gendarmes.

In 2001 unknown persons attacked and killed the sister of journalist and publisher Tape Koulou and a friend of the family. Police arrested Julien Ileboudo in connection with the investigation. On January 22, police beat and killed Ileboudo, whose body was found at the entrance to the morgue with broken legs, head injuries, and burned genitals.

At the National Reconciliation Forum in 2001, Gbagbo pledged to reopen the investigation into the Yopougon massacre. In August 2001, Justice Minister Siene Oulai appointed a preparatory committee to reinvestigate the

events of late 2000, particularly the Yopougon mass grave. The committee included three investigating magistrates along with five gendarmes and five police investigators. By year's end, the Government had taken no further action.

More than 150 complaints against government leaders were filed by the Belgian NGO Genocide Prevention on behalf of victims of the October 2000 Yopougon mass grave and December 2000 violence. In June Brussels Court of Criminal Appeals dismissed the complaints because the persons charged were not on Belgian territory at the time of the alleged crime.

There were no further developments in cases from 2000, including election-related violence.

After the September 19 coup attempt, rebels arrested approximately 100 gendarmes in Boauke and held them for several weeks. On October 8, when government forces entered Bouake, many persons mistakenly thought they had reconquered the town and some inhabitants came out to celebrate. Rebel troops fired into the crowd, killing and injuring an unknown number of persons. According to AI, the rebels reportedly then executed the 100 arrested gendarmes, who were buried in a mass grave. There also were reliable reports that rebels executed a number of the sons of gendarmes and killed numerous citizens of northern origin who challenged them.

When government troops briefly re-took Bouake on October 8, ethnic Baoules who were usually members of the Democratic Party of Cote d'Ivoire (PDCI) party reportedly captured three northern rebel sympathizers and burned them to death by setting fire to tires placed around their necks. When the rebels were back in control, northern sympathizers with the rebels reportedly killed six loyalists Baoules in the same manner.

In Korhogo and Daloa, rebels also killed a number of gendarmes and civilians thought to be loyal to the Government. AI reported that many of the victims in rebel-held territory were criticized by their neighbors as military officers or government sympathizers. With the emergence of rebel groups in the west in late November, there were numerous credible reports by escaping citizens and international witnesses that rebels slit the throats or disemboweled local inhabitants, gang raped women, chopped off limbs, and threw persons into wells to drown.

Unknown assailants killed persons during the year. For example, on November 6, Philippe Mohamed Rady, a prominent member of the Lebanese business community, died of injuries inflicted by unknown assailants who attacked him for unknown reasons. On November 18, unknown assailants attacked and killed Tchegbe Zoumana Ouattara, a 61-year-old trucking company owner, at his Abidjan home.

There were numerous incidents of ethnic violence that resulted in deaths (see Section 5).

b. Disappearance

There were several reports of disappearances. For example, according to press reports, the police detained three gendarme commandos who were suspected of coup-plotting between June and August in Abidjan; however, their whereabouts were unknown at year's end.

Following the September 19 rebellion, MIDH reported that many of the UDPCI and RDR members arrested by security forces had been released; however, the whereabouts of 39 persons remained unknown at year's end.

On November 6, "men in fatigues" arrested prominent businessman Herve Pamah Coulibaly at his home; his whereabouts remained unknown at year's end.

On November 14, in Yamoussoukro, security forces arrested Vakefa Malick Soumahoro, the financial director of a trucking company, who was on his way to be interviewed by Minister Wodie, according to his family. He subsequently disappeared. Soumahoro's wife and family met with the Prime Minister and Minister Wodie, who appealed for information about Soumahoro in the local press; however, Soumahoro remained missing at year's end.

The Victims Committee of Cote d'Ivoire (CVCI) alleged that several of its members disappeared after police dispersed their demonstration in July 2001.

During 2001 at least 30 persons disappeared in ethnic conflicts, particularly in the west and center of the country, and remained missing at year's end.

There were no developments in the disappearances of numerous persons following the 2000 presidential elections or in the disappearance of 10 Malians arrested in late 2000 election-related demonstrations.

c. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

The Constitution prohibits such practices; however, in practice security forces sometimes beat detainees and prisoners to punish them or to extract confessions. Police officers frequently forced detainees to perform degrading tasks while under threat of physical harm; press photographs sometimes showed prisoners with swollen or bruised faces and bodies. There were numerous reports of police and gendarmes entering homes and businesses to extort money (see Sections 1.d., 1.f., and 2.d.). Police detained persons overnight in police stations where they often beat detainees and forced them to pay bribes. Police also harassed persons of northern origin or with northern names. Poor training and supervision of security forces, the public's fear of pressing charges, and the impunity of those responsible for committing abuses contributed to the problem.

In February the CCER was dissolved by presidential decree. In previous years, there were credible reports that the CCER, a special police service that had its headquarters at the Presidency in central Abidjan, had become a center of judicial investigation, beatings, and torture (see Section 4).

On June 12, approximately 20 gendarmes beat and robbed merchants near the mosques in the Adjame section of Abidjan. In protest against gendarme and police treatment, merchants and transporters went on a 48-hour strike.

Members of the security forces continued to beat and harass journalists regularly; however, there were fewer reports of beatings than in the previous year (see Section 2.a.).

During the year, police beat persons who criticized or angered the Government. For example, on March 11, 12 unknown persons severely beat Pasteur Faustin Leka, the president of the Ivoirian Party For Democracy (PID). Leka, who was hospitalized for 1 month, had written articles critical of President Gbagbo and the governing FPI party. He stated that his attackers accused him of being a traitor to his Christian and Bete background. It was unclear whether uniformed forces or party militants beat Leka.

On April 18, six gendarmes reportedly arrested and beat Alexis Gouanou, the Secretary General of the Youth of the Grand West for having released medical information about Commander Bekpan, one of the gendarmes tried and acquitted for the Yopougon mass grave.

On July 2, near a police precinct in Abidjan, unknown assailants beat Francois Kouadio of the Presidency's Office of the Inspector General, despite his having a government protective detail. Kouadio had completed a report on cocoa marketing that accused some government officials, as well as private operators and organizations, of corruption.

After the September 19 rebellion, security forces on heightened alert for potential rebel infiltrators or active sympathizers erected numerous roadblocks and searched Abidjan neighborhoods, frequently during nightly curfew. There were numerous reports that police and gendarmes continued to harass, beat, extort, and commit other abuses with impunity.

Also after September 19, there were credible reports of special militias comprised of uniformed forces operating outside the normal chain of command of the Ministries of Defense (gendarmes) and Interior (police) and involving members or units of the President's security force. There also were reports of civilian militia that reportedly operated with political and judicial impunity and were responsible for extortion, robberies, and killings (see Section 1.a.).

During the rebellion, individuals associated with opposition parties or rebellion leaders or believed to be sympathizers were subjected to increased harassment and abuse. Several hundred RDR members were arrested without legal procedures having been followed, and a number reportedly were killed by security forces under unclear circumstances (see Sections 1.a. and 1.d.).

After September 19, police harassment and abuse of noncitizen Africans increased significantly as the Government blamed many of the surrounding countries for complicity in the crisis. Noncitizen Africans, mostly from neighboring countries, complained after September 19 that they were subject to police harassment, repeated document checks, increased security force extortion and racketeering, and violence.

Police and security forces continued to use excessive force to disperse demonstrations, some of which were violent (see Section 2.b.).

There were credible reports of disciplinary or legal actions against some police officers for mistreating suspects and arrestees during the year; however, critics deemed such actions uneven and inadequate. On May 15, Minister of Interior Boga Doudou fired 50 police officers and gendarmes, suspended 27 others for racketeering and extortion, and had 8 police officers and 4 gendarmes arrested on racketeering and extortion charges. Minister Boga Doudou stated that the suspensions and arrests would be an example to other officers; however, independent newspapers noted that the majority of those fired were of northern origin and suggestd that the Minister of Interior was using the occasion to reduce their numbers in the police ranks.

In August Minister of Interior Boga Doudou issued a statement threatening sanctions against members of the security forces who confiscated or destroyed noncitizens' identification papers; however, no action was taken by year's end (see Sections 1.a., 1.d., 1.f., and 5).

On July 26, police arrested Sergeant Baba Nene for the July killing of taxi driver Kalilou Keita (see Section 1.a.). On September 11, police arrested Blea Tia in the shooting of taxi driver Seydou Kone; an investigation was ongoing at year's end.

There were no reports of action taken against members of the security forces in any of the following incidents in 2001: The April shooting of a taxi driver in Daloa; the April beating of Dago Fabrice in Yopougon; the May beating of a man in Daloa; the May beating of eight persons, including a secondary school teacher and two girls; and the June forcible dispersal of a strike at Blohorn Unilever.

There were no reported disciplinary actions against members of the security forces responsible for abuses committed during 2000.

During the year, there were fewer reports that Liberian refugees in the western part of the country faced harassment and threats from supporters of Liberian President Charles Taylor.

There were numerous incidents of ethnic violence during the year, some of which resulted in injuries (see Section 5).

After September 19, in the northern half of the country, rebel military police operated with impunity in administering justice without legally constituted executive or judicial oversight. There also were credible reports of rebel soldiers or local recruits harassing and abusing with impunity local citizens, often on the basis of ethnic background and presumed political leanings.

Conditions were poor and in some cases life threatening in the country's 33 prisons, largely because of inadequate budgets and overcrowding. In November the main Abidjan Arrest and Correction Center (MACA) prison in Abidjan housed 5,200 detainees; it was built for 1,500. There were credible reports that prisoners frequently brutalized other prisoners for sleeping space and rations; however, there were no reports of guards brutalizing prisoners. The daily food allowance per prisoner in the MACA was $0.12 (80 CFA francs) the cost of one serving of corn meal mush. In other prisons, the daily allowance was $0.18. Families frequently supplemented the food ration and at some prisons inmates grew vegetables to feed themselves. The Red Cross helped feed prisoners with no family. Doctors Without Borders (MSF) supplemented the prison system's inadequate medical facilities. Several small national and international charities also helped some prisoners. There were press reports of a flourishing drug trade and prostitution in the MACA.

During the year, some prisoners reportedly died from the crowding, disease, and malnutrition in the MACA. During the month of September, according to a newspaper report from the western city of Man, 38 of the 541 inmates in the city's prison died. In 2001 poor treatment and poor conditions reportedly resulted in the deaths of 160 prisoners.

On October 18, more than 500 prisoners in Man made an attempted unsuccessful escape. A week later, in the central cities of Bouafle and Divo, 16 prisoners were killed during prison breaks.

In early January, President Gbagbo announced a decree amnestying more than 7,000 convicted prisoners, but not including inmates who had committed serious crimes.

Men and women were held separately in prisons. Male minors were held separately from adult men, but the physical barriers at the main MACA prison were inadequate to enforce complete separation. Prison conditions for women and children remained particularly difficult. Female prisoners were segregated in a separate building under female guard. There were no reports during the year that guards raped female prisoners; however, there were continued reports that female prisoners engaged in sexual relations with wardens to get food and privileges. There were no health facilities for women. Pregnant prisoners went to hospitals to give birth and then returned to prison with their babies. Some women prisoners were pregnant before being jailed. The penitentiary accepted no responsibility for the care or feeding of the infants; the women received help from local NGOs such as L'Amour en Action and the International Catholic Office for Children (BICE). During the year, BICE removed 500 children from the prison and placed them with family members or foster families and provided female inmates with food, medical care, clothing, and other necessities.

Juvenile offenders were held separately from adults. At the end of 2001, 170 juveniles aged 13 to 17, including 11 girls, were in detention. According to a local press report, in 2000 approximately 2,500 children spent time in the country's 33 prisons. During the year, BICE taught juvenile prisoners trades, such as sewing, carpentry, gardening, house painting, and drawing.

Pretrial detainees were held with convicted prisoners.

The Government permitted access to prisons by local and international NGOs that provided prisoners with food and medical care, as well as spiritual and moral support. BICE, as well as international NGOs such as the ICRC, Prisoners Without Borders, MSF, World Doctors, and local NGOs such as Action Justice, French Speaking Countries Outreach (FSCO), and International Prisons' Friendship had access to the prisons in the country. However, none of these NGOs monitored human rights conditions. LIDHO and MIDH monitored human rights but had to await written permission from the warden.

After taking control of the northern half of the country in the September 19 rebellion, rebels released the 300 detainees in the Korhogo penitentiary and the 2,200 prisoners in the Bouake prison and penal camp, gave many of them arms, and forced them into military service. Rebel leaders stated that they had no way to feed and maintain the prisoners, many of whom had no family in the area.

In October the ICRC visited prisoners detained by rebels in Bouake. There were credible reports that the rebels killed many of the prisoners. The rebels reportedly considered the dozens of men they were holding to be loyalist infiltrators who took part in the failed attempt to retake the city in early October.

d. Arbitrary Arrest, Detention, or Exile

The Constitution prohibits arbitrary arrest and detention; however, in practice arbitrary arrest and detention remained a common occurrence. Under the Code of Penal Procedure, a public prosecutor may order the detention of a suspect for 48 hours without bringing charges, and in special cases, the law permits an additional 48-hour period. Police often held persons for more than the 48-hour legal limit without bringing charges. According to members of the jurists' union, this practice was common, and magistrates often were unable to verify that detainees who were not charged in fact were released. A magistrate could order preventive detention for up to 4 months but also had to provide the Minister of Justice with a written justification on a monthly basis for continued detention. Despite the frequency of arbitrary arrest, there was no accurate total of persons held (see Section 1.e.).

Although the law prohibits it, police restricted access to some prisoners. There were reports of police denying detainees access to a lawyer or to their families. Police treatment of lawyers improved during the year.

Defendants do not have the right to a judicial determination of the legality of their detention. A judge may release pretrial detainees on provisional liberty if the judge believed that the suspect was not likely to flee. Many inmates continued to suffer long detention periods in the MACA and other prisons while awaiting trial. A magistrate reported in November that more than 1,770 of the 5,370 detainees (31 percent) in the MACA prison were awaiting trial (see Section 1.c.). Despite the legal limit of 10 months of pretrial detention in civil cases and 22 months in criminal cases, some detainees were held in detention for many years awaiting trial. In January there was a credible newspaper report that six detainees at the Bouake penal work camp had been held for 12 years without trial and there were others who had been in the camp for 10 years awaiting trial.

There were many instances throughout the year of the gendarmes or other security forces making arbitrary arrests, and such arrests increased after September 19. Domestic and international human rights groups--AI, HRW, and the UNCHR--criticized the arbitrary arrests and detentions. National and international human rights groups were

unable to give precise figures on detainees as government authorities would not allow them to visit military installations where prisoners were held. At year's end, MIDH reported 115 detainees at the MACA and 43 at the DST, but was unable to gather further information. Journalists were arrested, detained, or questioned for short periods of time without being charged (see Section 2.a.).

On July 3, police and gendarmes ransacked a Williamsville neighborhood in search of weapons and arrested approximately 100 residents. They were released a few days later. The RDR and some independent newspapers alleged that the authorities' action was an attempt to intimidate voters in the RDR-leaning district prior to the July 7 departmental elections.

During the municipal electoral campaign in March 2001, the police arrested an RDR student leader Diarrassouba and newspaper editor Bakayako. The then president of FESCI, a student organization close to the FPI, accused Diarrassouba of attempted murder. In April 2001, he and several other RDR leaders were released without charge. A short time later, Diarrassouba and fellow student leader Kamagate were arrested and imprisoned after protesting the outcome of an FESCI election. At the end of the year, they reportedly still were in detention in the MACA.

During the year, security forces arbitrarily arrested merchants and transporters. For example, on April 29, gendarmes raided a market in Abidjan and arrested and held 15 persons without charges. The gendarmes released nine of the arrestees within 1 week, but six others remained detained in an unknown location without family visits or legal counsel. All but one of the 15 arrestees were citizens from the northern region.

The DST was charged with collecting and analyzing information relating to national security. The DST had the authority to hold persons for up to 4 days without charges, but human rights groups stated there were numerous cases of detentions exceeding the statutory limit. Lawyers at MIDH and the president of the human rights NGO Justice Action accused the DST of expanding its role to include preliminary judicial investigations and police custody. Justice Action alleged that the DST, which was part of the Ministry of Interior, was trying to assume functions carried out by court authorities and the Ministry of Justice. Some DST arrestees claimed that they were denied contact with family members or a lawyer.

On June 28, the DST arrested police General Mouhandou Alain, Inspector of Police Services, and held him for 42 days, accusing him of working with the military in Burkina Faso to destabilize the country. He was released on August 9 without being charged.

During the months prior to the events of September, security forces arrested a number of persons from the north of the country, persons of northern origin, and RDR party members and officials. For example, on June 8, a police team in Korhogo arrested Soro Tchorna Abou and Yeo Alassane and accused them of plotting against President Gbagbo. The DST reportedly denied the two men legal counsel and after 3 weeks reported one of the men missing. On June 21, the DST arrested and held incommunicado for 2 months businesswoman Assita Sylla. On August 10, the military Rapid Intervention Unit (BIR) arrested at home Ibrahim Keita, the President of Cora de Comstar, a cellular telephone company, and took him to the DST. Keita had access to his physician and after 3 days, his lawyer. The Government accused Keita of financing destabilization efforts. On August 13, the Government arrested Kone Miriam, a businesswoman and local RDR leader, and a friend of Keita's son, Ali Omais. On September 12, authorities released Assista Sylla, Ibrahim Keita, Kone Miriam, and Ali Omais for lack of evidence.

In the weeks before the September 19 rebellion, the DST arrested 27 military personnel and held them incommunicado as security risks. Many of the soldiers detained were northerners and at least nine of the soldiers were close to former junta leader General Guei. In early July, the DST arrested several gendarmes on grounds of plotting a coup d'etat. At year's end, they still were in detention.

After the September 19 rebellion, local and international human rights organizations reported government security forces made many arbitrary arrests, frequently without warrants and frequently holding persons beyond the statutory limits without bringing charges. There were credible reports that the police and gendarmes detained persons in various military camps in Abidjan. Few of these detainees entered the civil justice system. There also were credible reports of forced confessions.

After the September 19 rebellion, the Government established telephone hotlines and encouraged citizens to report persons believed to be "assailants." HRW and AI criticized the Government's abuse of this law enforcement tool. They reported that authorities made numerous arrests based on hotline denunciations of persons for unproven sympathies with the rebels or "suspicious" activity and thus generated a general climate of fear and abuse. In the northern half of the country, AI and others reported that rebels similarly arrested and mistreated

persons based on a neighbor's denunciation or suspicion that an individual's sympathies were with the Government.

HRW and AI also reported that since September 19 there were 82 persons who had been arrested and put in prison that ICRC was able to track in the judicial records. AI investigators reported in mid-October that, despite obtaining the agreement of the Justice Minister, they were denied access to some detainees.

Some of the persons arrested included mayors and party leaders, such as: Ali Keita, RDR deputy party spokesman, and Ali Dosso, an official of the Central Bank of the West African States CFA Franc zone (BCEAO)--Dosso was released and Ali Keita remained in the MACA prison at year's end; Tiemoko Yade Coulibaly, the RDR Mayor of Sinematiali and the Chairman of Societe General Banque de Cote d'Ivoire (SGBCI)--he was released within a short time; Ouattara Yaya, RDR political commissioner in the northern city of Ferkessedougou--he was placed under house arrest; Aly Coulibaly, RDR party spokesman and former journalist--he was released the next day; Camara Yerefe, a popular actor and television comedian nicknamed "H"--he was released after a short time; Clement Nabo, the RDR mayor of the port city of San Pedro--he was released the following day; the RDR deputy mayor of Vavoua--he remained in detention at year's end; Kamagate Lama, agronomist and RDR Municipal Counselor of Teningboue--his arrest status was unknown; several RDR party members in Dimbokro--they remained in detention at year's end; Mohamed Dembele, the 22-year-old son of Adama Dembele and the of the Alassane Ouattara support group--he was released after a few days; and two of San Pedro's assistant mayors, both RDR members--they remained incarcerated at year's end.

The Government arrested many members of the RDR and UDPCI parties whom it suspected of sympathizing with or of playing a role in the rebellion. Both accused the Government of conducting a "witch hunt" against opposition parties. By late October, the RDR stated that authorities had arrested more than 300 of its members, although a leader of the RDR youth wing stated a few days later that more than 500 members had been arrested. Party officials stated that party leaders typically were released after a day or two, but less well-known party members usually were held 1 to 2 weeks. Party officials stated that 55 members were released on November 18 from the DST and various gendarme installations. After the release, at year's end the RDR reported that 115 northerners, many of whom were RDR members, were held at Abidjan's MACA prison, 43 at the DST and gendarme establishments, and 20 elsewhere in the country.

In October the Secretary General of the youth wing of the UDPCI, founded by General Guei, alleged that government forces arrested and beat more than 30 party members and killed 1 person. In early November, party and press sources reported that in the western town of Man six party members were arrested, and a few days later three more leaders, including a deputy mayor, were arrested in Biankouima. They reportedly were transferred to the Gendarme Research Brigade in Abidjan and still were in detention without charge at year's end.

In June the Defense Minister granted permission to General Abdoulaye Coulibaly, the third ranking member of the 2000 military junta, to leave the country and he departed for France and Canada in early September.

On September 19, rebels in Bouake seized Sports Minister Francois Amichia and held him hostage for more than 1 week before he escaped. Rebels also prevented the president of the LIDHO from leaving Bouake for 1 week. He had traveled to Bouake to deliver university lectures when the September 19 rebellion occurred.

AI's October 18 report severely criticized rebel arrests of numerous persons, particularly in Bouake, and the lack of any news of those detainees.

On November 5, President Gbagbo issued a communique accusing the rebels of responsibility for widespread arrests, illegal detentions, and disappearances, but mentioned no specific cases and stated only that the accusations were based on credible information (see Section 1.a.). The communique called for an international observer mission to investigate abuses committed by the rebels in the north. In mid-December the UNCHR conducted a 1-week mission in government-held and rebel-held territories that corroborated reports of illegal arrests and detentions in both parts of the country.

The Constitution specifically prohibits forced exile, and no persons were exiled forcibly during the year.

e. Denial of Fair Public Trial

The Constitution provides for an independent judiciary; however, in practice the judiciary was subject to executive branch, military, and other outside influences. Although the judiciary was independent in ordinary criminal cases, it followed the lead of the executive in national security or politically sensitive cases. Judges served at the discretion

of the executive, and there were credible reports that they submitted to political pressure and financial influence. The judiciary was slow and inefficient.

The formal judicial system is headed by a Supreme Court and includes the Court of Appeals and lower courts. The Constitutional chamber, whose main responsibility is to determine the constitutionality of laws and the eligibility of presidential candidates, is part of the Supreme Court. At year's end, Kone Tia remained president of the Supreme Court. The Constitution grants the President of the Republic the power to replace the head of the court after a new parliament is convened.

Military courts did not try civilians. Although there were no appellate courts within the military court system, persons convicted by a military tribunal may petition the Supreme Court to set aside the tribunal's verdict and order a retrial.

In rural areas, traditional institutions often administered justice at the village level, handling domestic disputes and minor land questions in accordance with customary law. Dispute resolution was by extended debate, with no known instance of resort to physical punishment. The formal court system increasingly was superseding these traditional mechanisms. The Constitution specifically provides for a Grand Mediator to bridge traditional and modern methods of dispute resolution. The President appoints the Grand Mediator, who since his nomination by the Bedie Government, has been Mathieu Ekra.

The law provides for the right to public trial, although key evidence sometimes was given secretly. The Government did not always respect the presumption of innocence and the right of defendants to be present at their trials. Those convicted had the right of appeal, although higher courts rarely overturned verdicts. Defendants accused of felonies or capital crimes had the right to legal counsel. The judicial system provided for court-appointed attorneys; however, no free legal assistance was available, except infrequently when members of the bar provided pro bono advice to defendants for limited periods.

On March 5, more than 200 of the country's 700 magistrates marched in Abidjan to demand improved living conditions and higher salaries. On March 6, for the first time in the country's history, the judges went on strike. The judges ended their strike in return for the Government's promises that their grievances would be examined. Their salary and other demands had not been met by year's end.

On May 13, the trial began of 27 suspects in the attempted coup d'etat of January 2001. The 72 persons initially arrested were incarcerated for more than 1 year without a trial. They included 42 military personnel and 30 civilians, among whom were 3 Burkinabe, 2 Malians, and a Nigerien. The investigating magistrate released all but 27 before the trial. In a 4-part trial lasting several weeks, the court acquitted 19 of the 27. Of those found guilty, 2 were given 2-year prison sentences and 6 were given 20-year sentences for "undermining the security of the state and participating in an armed band." According to press reports, several witnesses in the trial contradicted themselves and withdrew their statements implicating Hamed Bassam Traore, who received a 20-year sentence.

On July 30, an Abidjan court began the trial of Jean Jacques Bechio, Alassane Ouattara's political and diplomatic advisor and former Minister of Civil Service and Ambassador to the U.N. The security forces arrested him in the aftermath of the January 2001 failed coup for crimes against the security of the state. The court later reduced the charge, eventually trying Bechio for illegal possession of military weapons and for reputedly having suspicious telephone conversations with an anonymous person in a private telephone booth. In a trial that widely was considered fair, the court handed down a 12-month suspended sentence, fined him $750 (500,000 CFA francs), and stripped him of his civil rights for 5 years.

In July 2001, eight gendarmes were tried in a short and procedurally flawed military trial for the Yopougon mass grave of 57 bodies discovered in late October 2000. With the trial held on a gendarme compound and with no protection offered to witnesses, a number of prosecution witnesses reportedly feared reprisals and failed to appear at the trial (see Section 1.a.). The judge acquitted all eight gendarmes, citing insufficient evidence. Several NGOs publicly demanded a new trial. The military prosecutor, who had requested life sentences for the accused, did not file an appeal. At the December 2001 Forum for National Reconciliation, President Gbagbo announced a reinvestigation of the Yopougon mass grave affair and in April the Government designated six magistrates to conduct the new inquiry but reportedly they had not met by year's end.

There were no reports of political prisoners; however, HRW and AI believed that political leaders who were detained and not yet released at year's end primarily because of their opposition political views rather than hard evidence of involvement in the coup, should be considered political prisoners.

There was little available information on the judicial system used by the rebels in northern region; however, on

November 8, a French press article described rebel military police bringing suspected thieves and racketeers to a "judge" dressed in fatigues who in a quasi-judicial process pronounced sentence, including imprisonment in the local jail. The rebels reported that they have imprisoned several dozen persons as common criminals in Bouake.

f. Arbitrary Interference with Privacy, Family, Home, or Correspondence

The Code of Penal Procedure specifies that a law officer or investigative magistrate may conduct searches of persons, vehicles, homes, or any other nonpublic place, with authorization of the appropriate judicial or administrative authority, if there is reason to believe that there is evidence on the premises concerning a crime. The official must have the prosecutor's agreement to retain any evidence seized in the search and is required to have witnesses to the search, which may take place at any time of day or night. The events of September 19 triggered a widespread suspension of privacy rights.

In practice police sometimes used a general search warrant without a name or address. Police frequently entered the homes of noncitizen Africans (or apprehended them at large), took them to local police stations, and extorted small amounts of money for alleged minor offenses. Police and gendarmes entered the homes of opposition members throughout the country, often without a warrant (see Sections 1.c. and 1.d.). Police also searched the homes and offices of journalists (see Section 2.a.).

For example, soon after the failed coup of September 19, security forces ransacked the offices of the Daloa mayor and other municipal officials; the mayor and other officials were members of the RDR party.

On September 19, the home of RDR leader Alassane Ouattara was looted and burned to the ground by unidentified persons while it ostensibly was under government protection. Ouattara and his wife had taken refuge at the residence of the German Ambassador next door, but within a few hours were moved at the request of the Government to the residence of the French Ambassador. On September 26, gendarmes conducted a warrantless search of the residence of Samassi Baba, Ouattara's driver.

Security forces reportedly monitored private telephone conversations, but the extent of the practice was unknown. The Government admitted that it listened to fixed line and cellular telephone calls. Government authorities monitored letters and parcels at the post office for potential criminal activity and they were believed to monitor private correspondence, although no evidence of this was produced. After September 19, in the northern towns of Bouake and Katiola, rebels also monitored parcels for potential threats to their position.

Members of the Government reportedly continued to use students as informants.

Government security forces in Abidjan began the destruction of shantytowns near military installations inhabited by both noncitizen Africans and citizens. These dwelling areas reportedly harbored rebels and weapon caches. The destruction of these houses resulted in the displacement of tens of thousands of persons. An estimated 30 percent of Abidjan's population lived in unauthorized, illegally constructed shantytowns.

On October 4, the government announced that it would destroy all shantytowns in the city within a month. On October 8, after an international outcry, President Gbagbo ordered the security forces to stop the destruction of the shantytowns, with the exception of those near military bases, and appealed for a halt to the attacks on foreigners. Nevertheless, security forces continued to raze shantytowns, often using physical violence against the inhabitants and robbing them.

On October 3 and 4, Minister for Human Rights Wodie visited a number of sites cleared by security forces and announced that the inhabitants of those sites would be resettled in centers operated by the Ministry of Social Security and Health. The social centers established generally were converted houses that represented inadequate and, at best, temporary dormitory accommodations for displaced families.

On October 16 and 17, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that security forces without warning destroyed several hundred more homes in shantytowns, displacing approximately 2,000 persons. Many of the displaced sought refuge at UNHCR-sponsored centers. On October 18, after the curfew, security forces arrived at the Koumassi shelter and interrogated its 200 refugees outside of the structure. Other similar incidents occurred at other refugee centers (see Section 2.d.).

Unlike in the previous year, there were no incidents reported of security forces seizing the property of opposition leaders and prominent persons at the airport.

There were corroborated reports that the rebels forcibly conscripted locals to join their ranks (see Section 1.c.). Those who refused reportedly disappeared. Many of the conscripts were youth or children, although there also were reports that many volunteered to join the rebels.

Section 2 Respect for Civil Liberties, Including:

a. Freedom of Speech and Press

The Constitution provides for freedom of expression; however, the Government restricted this right in practice. Private newspapers frequently criticized government policy. Before the rebellion of September 19, the arrest, prosecution, and imprisonment of journalists decreased significantly from the previous year. Nevertheless, members of the security forces continued to harass and sometimes beat journalists. Outspoken members of the press continued to receive death threats and suffer physical intimidation from groups aligned with the ruling FPI party. Until September journalists did not practice self-censorship and frequently criticized government policy; however, the September 19 rebellion triggered significant self-censorship and a deterioration of press freedom. Journalists did not wish to appear "unpatriotic."

The only remaining government-owned daily newspaper, Fraternite Matin, which had the greatest circulation of any daily, rarely criticized government policy. The Government's planned privatization of Fraternite Matin was on hold at year's end. The Minister of Communication repeated on several occasions that government newspapers were incompatible with democratic societies. There were a number of private newspapers: Approximately 20 dailies; 30 weeklies; 5 semimonthlies; and 10 monthlies. Newspapers often ceased publication and were supplanted by others due to strong competition, a limited audience, and financial constraints. A few newspapers were politicized, sometimes resorting to fabricated stories to defame political opponents. The law requires the "right of response" in the same newspaper, thus newspapers often printed articles in opposition to an earlier article.

The National Press Commission (CNP) was established officially in November 2001; its function was to enforce regulations relating to the creation, ownership, and freedom of the press. Unlike in the previous year, the CNP did not suspend any newspapers during the year.

The Government exercised considerable influence over the official media's program content and news coverage, using them to promote government policies and criticize the opposition. Much of the news programming during the year was devoted to the activities of the President and government officials.

The law authorizes the Government to initiate criminal libel prosecutions against officials. Although some newspapers voiced their disapproval of presidential or government actions frequently and vocally, the Government did not tolerate insults or attacks on the country's highest officials, foreign chiefs of state or government, or their diplomatic representatives. In addition, the State may criminalize a civil libel suit at its discretion or at the request of the plaintiff. Criminal libel was punishable by from 3 months to 2 years in prison.

In August a court ordered a 3-month suspension of Le National, a right-wing nationalistic paper, after a civil administrator filed defamation charges. Despite the order, Le National, which previously was regarded as close to the governing PDCI, but later was considered close to the governing FPI, continued to publish.

On October 29, the trial of three journalists from Le Jour was slated to begin, but was deferred and had not taken place at year's end. The President of the National Assembly, Mamadou Koulibaly, sued the journalists for defamation for writing a detailed July 2000 article accusing him of corruption in his former capacity as Minister of Finance.

Security forces continued to beat and harass journalists. For example, in late January, police beat Le Jour journalist Abou Traore in the garden of Interior Minister Boga Doudou's house. Traore was writing a story about the negotiations between Boga Doudou and police officers on strike. The CNP and the Observatory of Press Liberty and Ethnics (OLPED), the journalists' association, wrote letters to the Government criticizing the beating.

In February Bledson Mathieu, the editor of the weekly satirical cartoon newspaper Gbich, received several death threats from unknown persons.

On September 9, 10 uniformed policemen raided the offices of the Mayama Press Group, which published Le Patriote, Tassouman, and Abidjan-Magazine. All three publications were independent, but were considered close to the RDR and its leader, Alassane Ouattara. Tassouman published a story that Minister of Interior Boga Doudou was using a vehicle previously stolen by carjackers. In spite of the newspaper's promise to correct the information

and report that the stolen vehicle belonged to the Minister of National Solidarity, police tear gassed the offices and beat at least four journalists. On September 11, a ministerial delegation visited the office, expressed its regret over the raid, and insisted that the Government and Minister Boga Doudou had not supported or instigated the actions.

Following the rebellion of September 19, the Government gradually reduced press freedoms in the name of patriotism and national unity. In late September, Minister of Communications Sery Bailly declared that "the safest thing for journalists was to report the news in a proper manner" and that the crisis should motivate journalists to prove their patriotism and to defend the country. A few weeks later, the CNP reminded journalists that while newspapers could continue their independent editorial policies, "in view of the prevailing war situation" the journals must "display a sense of patriotism." Outspoken members of the press who questioned government policy reported physical intimidation and receiving death threats from groups aligned with the FPI party and the Government. Foreign journalists complained to the Government of similar threats.

On September 19, the pro-RDR Le Patriote suspended publication because of threats received from youth groups reportedly allied with the ruling party. In late September, FPI and government activists severely beat Le Patriote journalist Keita Mamadi while he was attending a FPI-government meeting in Yopougon. On October 10, Le Patriote resumed daily publication, but on October 16, approximately 40 youths carrying weapons ransacked its offices. Le Patriote began publishing again in a few days. Reporters Without Borders (RSF) lodged a formal protest with the Government over the attack, and the OLPED also criticized the attack.

On October 16, Nouveau Reveil suspended publication in response to persistent death threats since September 19 allegedly made by persons close to the FPI and the Government. Le Nouveau Reveil often carried articles critical of the FPI and the Government. On October 19, the CNP released a statement that "noted with regret" the vandalism against Le Patriote and the threats against Le Nouveau Reveil, which was close to the PDCI. The CNP called on relevant authorities to take all necessary measures to provide for the security of all parties.

On September 25, 10 gendarmes searched without a warrant the residence of Louis Andre Dacoury-Tabley, the owner of Le Front opposition daily newspaper, which frequently criticized the FPI and the Government. Dacoury-Tabley was outside of the country, but a few weeks later emerged as the rebel spokesman.

There were several reports during the year, but particularly after September 19, of international journalists being subjected to government harassment and intimidation. Since the uprising began, several foreign journalists and cameramen were threatened or physically attacked and their cameras seized. Because of continued insecurity, some international reporters and the citizens who worked for foreign press agencies chose to leave the country temporarily.

On October 29, the Government's daily, Fraternite Matin, carried a report from the peace negotiations between the Government and rebels, featuring questions and answers from both sides' negotiators, and marking the first time the state media carried direct statements from the rebel spokesman. The state-controlled television and radio carried the same story later with the interviews with negotiators for both sides.

On November 13, in an interview in Fraternite Matin, Minister of Communications Sery Bailly stated that any journalist conducting an interview with the rebel MPCI could face prosecution. He explained that the Government had teams that met daily to guide national radio and television programming and the Government's daily newspaper to ensure that they promoted a positive image of the Government and "had the orientation that the Government judged necessary and useful."

No action was taken against members of the security forces who beat and harassed journalists in 2001 and 2000.

Because of low literacy rates, radio was the most important medium of mass communications. Newspapers and television were relatively expensive. The government-owned broadcast media company, RTI, owned two major radio stations; only the primary government radio station broadcast nationwide. Neither station offered criticism of the Government; both government-owned stations frequently criticized opposition parties and persons critical of the Government. Four major private international radio stations operated: Radio France Internationale (RFI), the British Broadcasting Company (BBC), Africa Number One, and Radio Nostalgie; however, all were off the air at year's end. These stations broadcast on FM in Abidjan only, except for RFI, which broadcast via relay antennas to the north and center of the country. The RFI and BBC stations retransmitted internationally produced programming. The Africa Number One station, which was 51 percent locally owned, broadcast 6 hours of locally produced programming every day; retransmitted programming from Africa Number One's headquarters in Libreville, Gabon, filled the remaining air time. Radio Nostalgie was 51 percent owned by Radio Nostalgie France, but it was considered a local radio station. The RFI, BBC, and Africa Number One stations all broadcast news and political

commentary about the country.

There were approximately 50 community radio stations authorized under government regulations. They had limited broadcast range and were allowed no foreign language programming, no advertising, and only public announcements limited to the local area. Some of the stations did not broadcast for the lack of resources.

In May 2001 the Government announced that five new private TV stations and eight new private radio stations would begin broadcasting. The first of these, Private TVCI International, began broadcasting in mid-October.

The Government owned and operated two television stations (RTI 1 and RTI 2) that broadcast domestically produced programs. Only one broadcast nationwide. Neither station criticized the Government, but they frequently criticized the opposition or persons who opposed the Government's actions. There were two satellite television broadcasters: One French (Canal Horizon/TV5), and one South African (DS TV). They did not broadcast domestically produced programs. The Government did not accept any applications to establish privately owned domestic television stations.

The private radio stations, except for Radio Nostalgie, had complete control over their editorial content. The Government monitored Radio Nostalgie closely because the major shareholders of the company were close to RDR president Alassane Ouattara. National broadcast regulations forbade the transmission of any political commentary, and Radio Nostalgie's operations were suspended temporarily several times in 2001 for allegedly violating that regulation. Radio Nostalgie was ransacked on several occasions before and after September 19. On October 17, approximately 20 men wearing military uniforms ransacked the offices of Radio Nostalgie. Eyewitnesses reportedly saw them arrive in vehicles bearing government markings. The office of Radio Nostalgie's chief executive officer, Hamed Bakayoko, was ransacked on September 9. Bakayoko was a northerner and was considered to be close to Alassane Ouattara and the RDR. With the events of September 19, Radio Nostalgie switched to an all-music format, broadcasting no news. RSF lodged a formal protest with the Government over the attack and the OLPED also criticized the attack.

After the uprising began September 19, managers of the state-controlled television and radio stations denied several dozen staff members access to work. According to the pro-RDR newspapers, the employees were dismissed because they were not partisans of the governing FPI party. Although full programming continued, the RTI Director claimed that workers were denied access because the stations needed only essential staff as a result of the post-September 19 turmoil and programming modifications.

On September 22, the Government suspended the local FM broadcasts of RFI, BBC, and Africa Number One, because they allegedly broadcast untrue, distorted, or biased reports on the conflict and supported the rebels. All three stations had aired statements or interviews with rebel soldiers as well as wide-ranging reports on events throughout the country. Government-controlled broadcasts continued uninterrupted.

On October 10, three armed policemen detained BBC correspondent Kate Davenport. The policemen initially attempted to confiscate the reporter's equipment; however, when she refused to hand it over, the police forced themselves into her car and demanded that she drive them to a police station. The police released Davenport after a few hours.

On October 17, DST officials arrested Gael Mocaer, a French freelance radio producer, at his hotel room, and held him at the government's intelligence headquarters in Abidjan, reportedly because he might have filmed buildings without permission. Officials reportedly removed his personal belongings from the hotel, held him without charges, and denied him visitors. On October 23, Mocaer was released without explanation or charges being brought.

On October 21, the rebels in the central city of Bouake began broadcasting for several hours per day using the RTI TV station to air speeches and meetings of the MPCI, the rebels' political arm. In response to pro-rebel broadcasts, the Government accused the RTI technicians in Bouake of complicity in an illegal rebellion.

The Government did not restrict access to or distribution of other electronic media. There were 12 domestic Internet service providers, of which 4 were major providers. All 12 service providers were privately owned and relatively expensive. The licensing requirements imposed by the government telecommunications regulatory body, ATCI, reportedly were not unduly restrictive.

There is no law specifically concerning academic freedom; however, in practice the Government tolerated a considerable amount of academic freedom but inhibited political expression through its proprietary control of most

educational facilities, even at the post-secondary level. A presidential decree required authorization for all meetings on campuses.

Many prominent scholars active in opposition politics retained their positions at state educational facilities; however, some teachers and professors suggested that they have been transferred, or fear that they may be transferred, to less desirable positions because of their political activities. According to student union statements, security forces continued to use students as informants to monitor political activities at the University of Abidjan.

Members of the university and secondary students' association, FESCI, attacked and intimidated teachers, and there were violent conflicts between FESCI rival groups that resulted in a number of injuries and a reported death during the year.

There were student protests during the year (see Section 2.b.).

b. Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association

The Constitution allows for freedom of assembly; however, the Government sometimes restricted this right in practice. Groups that wished to hold demonstrations or rallies were required by law to submit a written notice of their intent to the Ministry of Security or the Ministry of Interior 3 days before the proposed event. No law expressly authorizes the Government to ban public meetings or events for which advance notice has been given in the required manner. In practice the Government prohibited specific events deemed prejudicial to the public order; even if authorization was granted, it later could be revoked.

There were a number of antigovernment marches prior to September 19; most were labor-related demands for pay increases and other benefits (see Section 6.b.). There were fewer instances than in the previous year of police forcibly dispersing demonstrations when they deemed that public order was threatened; generally they allowed the demonstrations to proceed. There were no reports of the police or other security forces restricting meetings of NGOs, labor organizations, religious groups, or professional associations.

On February 25, hundreds of female vendors from a market in the Yopougon section of Abidjan marched to the President's office to protest the use of police force to intimidate vendors. The police allegedly beat several vendors because they had refused to pay the market taxes. The Prime Minister's Cabinet Director met with the protesters.

In April police tear gassed shopkeepers in Yopougoon who were protesting the bulldozing of several small shops, which reportedly did not conform to building standards.

Following the September 19 rebellion, there were several progovernment demonstrations. On October 2, more than 10,000 persons marched peacefully in Abidjan to support President Gbagbo and the government forces against the rebels.

An October 22 demonstration at the French military base near the Abidjan airport resulted in injuries to dozens of marchers when French troops repelled them with tear gas and water cannons after they attempted to breach the front gate of the base.

No action was taken against security forces who forcibly dispersed demonstrations in 2001.

The Constitution provides for freedom of association and the Government generally respected this right in practice. The Government allowed the formation of political parties, trade unions, professional associations, and student and religious groups, all of which were numerous.

The Constitution states that all parties and nongovernment organizations must respect the laws of the Republic, including the requirement that all such organizations register with the Ministry of Interior before commencing activities. In order to obtain registration, political parties had to provide information on their founding members and produce internal statutes and political platforms or goals consistent with the Constitution. There were no reports that the Government denied registration to any group, but processing rarely was expeditious. There were more than 100 legally recognized political parties, 7 of which were represented in the National Assembly (see Section 3).

The Constitution prohibits the formation of political parties along ethnic or religious lines; however, in practice ethnicity and religion were key factors in some parties' membership (see Sections 2.c. and 5).

c. Freedom of Religion

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion and the Government generally respected that right; however, after September 19, the Government targeted persons perceived to be perpetrators or supporters of the rebellion, who often were Muslim.

There was no state religion; however, for historical as well as ethnic reasons, the Government informally favored Christianity, in particular the Roman Catholic Church. Catholic Church leaders had a stronger voice in government affairs than their Islamic counterparts, which led to feelings of disenfranchisement among some Muslims. In August President Gbagbo restructured and expanded his cabinet to include 6 Muslims among 37 ministers, one of whom became the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and was one of the President's closest advisers.

The law requires religious groups desiring to operate in the country to register. In practice the Government's regulation of religious groups generally has not been unduly restrictive. No religious group complained during the year of arbitrary registration procedures or recognition. Although non-traditional religious groups, like all public secular associations, were required to register with the Government, no penalties were imposed on groups that failed to register.

Members of the country's largely Christianized or Islamic urban elites, which effectively controlled the State, generally were disinclined to accord to traditional indigenous religions the social status accorded to Christianity and Islam.

Some Muslims believed that their religious or ethnic affiliation made them targets of discrimination by the Government with regard to both employment and the renewal of national identity cards (see Section 5). Due to the tense political situation in the country and the ethnic divisions that frequently were a strong factor in political party membership, Muslims (or persons with northern names assumed to be Muslim) sometimes reportedly were scrutinized more closely when applying for identity documents. As these northern Muslims shared names, style of dress, and customs with several of the country's predominantly Muslim neighboring countries, they sometimes were accused wrongly of attempting to obtain nationality cards illegally in order to vote or otherwise take advantage of citizenship. This created a hardship for a disproportionate number of Muslim citizens.

In late June, after months of improved relations, tensions rose between RDR supporters and FPI supporters in the period prior to the July departmental elections. In late June, security forces and RDR and FPI supporters clashed in and near Daloa. Party militants burned mosques and churches, as well as homes and villages, especially those of Muslims. Muslims accused the security forces of favoring the FPI. At least six persons were killed, although some estimates were much higher. Also in late June in Abidjan, members of a progovernment activist student union, FESCI, attacked and injured Muslim university students. Muslims accused FESCI of grouping Muslims, members of northern ethnic groups, and RDR loyalists into one identity.

The ongoing rebellion after September 19 generated new ethnic and religious strains. Security forces entered and searched mosques and homes of clerics and other Muslims without warrants, allegedly looking for arms or rebels and sympathizers (see Sections 1.a. and 1.d.). Security forces detained, questioned or beat some Muslims and questioned some Islamic leaders on suspicions that they were part of the unrest. Nationalist newspapers wrote of the "Islamic plot" to topple President Gbagbo, which led the Government to detain, arrest, and kill an estimated 200 Muslims.

On October 30, the CNI issued a statement asserting that since September 19 the Muslim community had fallen under unfair suspicion and was suffering arbitrary arrests, beatings, and killings by the security forces (see Sections 1.a., 1.c., and 1.d.). The CNI statement claimed that state television and radio had created a climate of hatred.

Rebels in Bouake and elsewhere in the north executed more than 100 persons, most of whom were Christian, who were members of the Government's armed forces or persons thought to be loyal to the Government (see Section 1.a.).

Conflicts within religious groups surfaced occasionally. In February the Celestial Christian Church reunified after the head of the church in Nigeria reinstated Blin Jacob Edimou, the founding priest of the Ivoirian Celestial Church, to his position as head of the Church. In June all churches that were closed following the violence reopened after the restoration of unity within the Harrist organization.

Relations between the various religious communities generally were amicable; however, there was some societal discrimination against Muslims and followers of traditional indigenous religions (animists).

Some non-Muslims opposed construction of mosques, on the grounds that the Islamic duty to give alms daily could attract beggars and some non-Muslims disliked hearing the public calls to prayer emanating from mosques.

Followers of traditional indigenous religions sometimes were subject to societal discrimination. Many Christians and Muslims looked down on practitioners of traditional indigenous religions as pagans, practitioners of black magic or human sacrifice, and refused to associate with them. The practices of traditional indigenous religions often were shrouded in secrecy, and included exclusive initiation rites, oaths of silence, and taboos against writing down orally transmitted history. However, many practitioners of traditional indigenous religions seemingly were unaware of societal discrimination and did not complain.

For a more detailed discussion see the 2002 International Religious Freedom Report.

d. Freedom of Movement Within the Country, Foreign Travel, Emigration, and Repatriation

The Constitution does not provide specifically for these rights, and the Government on occasion restricted them in practice. However, after September 19, freedom of movement was restricted further. The Government generally did not restrict internal travel. However, police, gendarmes, and water, forestry, and customs officials frequently erected and operated roadblocks on major roads, where they demanded that passing motorists or passengers produce identity and vehicle papers and regularly extorted small amounts of money or goods for contrived or minor infractions. In the period prior to the July departmental elections, FPI militants erected roadblocks to prevent members of other parties from campaigning or voting (see Section 3).

After September 19, security forces or local civilian "self defense committees" erected numerous roadblocks and harassed and extorted travelers, commercial traffic and truckers, foreigners, refugees, UNHCR workers, and others. Uniformed forces and civilian committees demanded payment at each roadblock, sometimes reportedly beating and detaining those who could not pay. In addition, the Government established a restrictive curfew from early evening until early morning that inhibited movement around the country.

Citizens normally traveled abroad, emigrated freely, and had the right of voluntary repatriation. However, after the September rebellion, opposition party members reported that they feared being arrested at the airport if they attempted to leave the country. Unlike in the previous year, there were no reported instances of restriction of opposition politicians from traveling outside of the country.

There were no known cases of revocation of citizenship. The citizenship issue continued to be debated extensively during the year. The public debate over Alassane Ouattara's citizenship, electoral eligibility, and reinstatement of his political and citizenship rights resulted in an Abidjan court granting him in June a certificate of nationality, valid for only 6 months, which was required to run for public office.

The Constitution does not provide for the granting of asylum or refugee status in accordance with the 1951 U.N. Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. The law includes refugees but does not specify a separate legal status for them. The Government provides first asylum, and, according to a UNHCR census in June, there were 72,000 registered refugees in the country, primarily from Liberia and Sierra Leone. From January to April, approximately 7,000 new Liberian refugees entered the country.

The Government cooperated with UNHCR and other humanitarian organizations in assisting refugees. The UNHCR announced plans during the year to close three field offices in the western part of the country; however, the Government protested the decision, and the UNHCR decided to retain two field offices. The September rebellion halted plans to build new refugee camps and the UNHCR removed its international staff from those field offices when the security situation deteriorated. As the Government and local press publicly blamed the rebellion on foreigners, UNHCR received threats because of its role in protecting Liberian and Sierra Leonean refugees.

In the 2 months following the September rebellion, an estimated 30,000 Burkinabe, and more than 1,000 Nigerians, Malians, and Guineans left the country. Various West African governments complained during the year about harassment of their citizens in the country (see Section 1.a.). The U.N. and other international organizations documented abuses against foreigners in Abidjan that included arbitrary arrest, beating, and theft of money and valuables. A foreign NGO documented many cases of gangs of youths working in conjunction with security authorities to beat and extort money and valuables from noncitizen Africans.

Following September 19 and the rebel takeover of the northern half of the country, an estimated 3,000 citizens sought refuge across the border in Mali. The Government continued to repatriate those citizens, transporting them by air to Abidjan. The repatriation program was ongoing at year's end.

After September the Government's destruction of shantytowns in Abidjan displaced tens of thousands of persons (see Section 1.f.). An estimated 80 percent were noncitizen Africans, mostly from Muslim dominated neighboring countries to the north. Citizens and other co-nationals in Abidjan neighborhoods took in a large number of the internally displaced persons (IDPs) temporarily. Some left for their home countries, some with the aid of their governments. Of the 7,000 IDPs from shantytown destruction, 1,000 were UNHCR-registered refugees. UNHCR placed these displaced urban refugees in temporary facilities. On numerous occasions, security forces visited these UNHCR centers after the curfew, checking the residents' identity documents and interrogating them, reportedly accusing some of them of being rebels and threatening to kill them. Despite repeated UNHCR protests to the Government, the practice continued during the year.

The identity card law included provision for the issuance of identity cards to refugees. The Minister of Defense indicated that the Government would issue cards free of charge to refugees, but none were issued during the year. Security officials often did not honor identity documents issued to refugees by the UNHCR. There were frequent reports of security officials stopping refugees to ask for identity documents. When the refugee produced only a UNHCR document, the security officials often also demanded money. There also were credible reports that security forces destroyed refugees' identity documents, arbitrarily detained, and occasionally beat refugees.

There were no reports of the forced return of persons to a country where they feared persecution.

Section 3 Respect for Political Rights: The Right of Citizens to Change Their Government

The Constitution provides for the right of citizens to change their government peacefully through democratic means. The Constitution and Electoral Code provide for presidential elections every 5 years and legislative elections every 5 years by a single and secret ballot. The Constitution also continues the tradition of a strong presidency. Significant violence and irregularities marred presidential elections held in October 2000 and legislative elections held in December 2000.

The Constitution of the Second Republic was implemented formally in August 2000. The Constitutional and Electoral Consultative Commission (CCCE), created by the junta's National Committee of Public Salvation (DNSP), drafted the Constitution. Members of major political parties and civil society comprised the CCCE; however, the CNSP and General Guei made changes to the CCCE's text prior to submitting the draft Constitution to a referendum. The Constitution was adopted in a referendum held in July 2000 by 86 percent of those voting. A quasi-independent commission that included representatives from some government ministries, civil society, and political parties supervised the referendum.

The Constitution includes language that is considered more restrictive than the Electoral Code on questions of parentage and eligibility requirements for candidates. The presidential elections followed several postponements and a controversial Supreme Court decision in October 2000, disqualifying 14 of the 19 candidates, including all of the PDCI and RDR candidates. RDR leader Ouattara was excluded from running in the presidential and legislative elections following the Supreme Court's rulings that he had not demonstrated conclusively that he was of Ivoirian parentage. Furthermore, the Court maintained that Ouattara had considered himself a citizen of Upper Volta (Burkina Faso) earlier in his career. The Court disqualified Emile Constant Bombet, PDCI candidate and former Interior Minister, because of pending charges of abuse of office when he was Minister. The Court disqualified former President Bedie, who also was the president of the PDCI party, because he did not submit the required medical certificate.

As a result of the Supreme Court decision, most international election observers declined to monitor the election. There were only 75 observers nationwide, 29 of whom were European Union observers whose original mission was to assess the overall security situation. The nationwide participation rate was 33 percent, and some polling places, especially in the north, closed early because of the lack of voters. Preliminary results showed that Gbagbo was leading by a significant margin. However, on October 23, 2000, soldiers and gendarmes entered the National Elections Commission (CNE) to stop the count. They expelled journalists and disrupted television and radio broadcasting. On October 24, 2000, Daniel Cheick Bamba, an Interior Ministry and CNE official, announced on national radio and television that the CNE had been dissolved and declared General Guei the victor with 56 percent of the vote. Thousands of Gbagbo supporters began protesting almost immediately, demanding a full vote count. Mass demonstrations continued until October 26, 2000, and resulted in numerous deaths and injuries. On October 25, 2000, national radio and television reported that Guei had stepped down.

When Gbagbo was inaugurated on October 26, 2000, gendarmes loyal to him violently suppressed RDR street demonstrators demanding new presidential elections. In December 2000, gendarmes and police officers also

violently dispersed members of the RDR who were demonstrating to protest against the invalidation of Ouattara's candidacy in the legislative elections (see Sections 1.c. and 2.b.).

The December 2000 National Assembly election was marred by violence, irregularities, and a very low participation rate. The FPI won 96 out of 225 seats in the National Assembly; the PDCI, the former ruling party, won 77 seats; independent candidates won 17 seats; and 4 other parties won 7 seats. Largely because of the RDR boycott of the elections to protest the invalidation of Ouattara's candidacy, the participation rate in the legislative election was only 33 percent. In addition, the election could not take place in 26 electoral districts in the north because RDR activists disrupted polling places, burned ballots, and threatened the security of election officials.

In January 2001, the Government conducted legislative by-elections in Agnibilekrou and in the northern regions where the elections had been boycotted and disrupted by the RDR. Following the legislative by-elections, 223 of the 225 seats of the National Assembly were filled: The FPI won 96 seats, the PDCI 94 seats, the PIT 4 seats, very small parties 2 seats, independent candidates 22 seats, and the RDR (in spite of its boycott of all of the legislative elections) 5 seats. The two seats from Kong, where Ouattara planned to run, remained unfilled as the RDR, the only party running in that electoral district, boycotted the elections.

Citizens' ability to elect sub-national governments was limited. The State remained highly centralized. Subnational government entities existed on several levels, and included 19 regions, 58 departments, 230 districts, and 196 communities. However, at the level of the region (regional prefect), the department (prefect), and the district (sub-prefect), the Government appointed office holders. Other departmental and community officials, including mayors, were elected, as were some traditional chieftains. Subnational governments relied on the central government for most of their revenues, but mayors had autonomy to hire and fire community administrative personnel.

On July 7, the country held its first province level departmental (provincial) elections. Voters selected 58 departmental councils to oversee local infrastructure development and maintenance as well as economic and social development plans and projects. Their functions were not yet completely defined in law. Voter turnout was 28 percent, compared with 40 percent in the 2001 municipal elections. The ongoing national identity card program was not completed by the election date, but the CEI and the Government nonetheless declared that only the new green national identity card, or an "attestation of identity" document issued by local authorities, was valid for voting. Independent observers calculated that almost one half of all eligible voters were excluded from the elections by the difficulties and controversy surrounding issuance of the green cards.

All parties complained that some of their members were unable to obtain identity cards in time for the voting, but the PDCI and RDR parties were the most affected. Independent observers and the independent local press reported cases of FPI party militants putting up roadblocks to prevent members of other parties from campaigning or voting and uniformed forces intimidating voters and opening ballot boxes to empty them of non-FPI votes.

In early August, President Gbagbo formed a national unity Government that included all major political parties. He expanded the cabinet from 28 to 37 portfolios. In the national unity Government the FPI and its political allies maintained more than two-thirds of the ministerial posts. On October 3, President Gbagbo created the new cabinet position of Minister of Interior for Security but simultaneously subsumed defense and security under the Presidency. In late November, the RDR party leadership announced that it was withdrawing its four ministers from the Government, and their successors had not been named at year's end.

The youth wings of political parties were allowed to organize and were active. The youth wing of the governing FPI party was a major political force. With the direct financial support through the presidency and the protection of the police and military, the FPI youth wing operated with impunity to control the political debate in the street, to intimidate the local and national press, and to exclude the youth wings of the other parties from the political debate. After the September 19 rebellion, on several occasions in October and November the youth wing of the FPI (JFPI); closely allied with Panafrican Congress of Young Patriots (COJEP) led by Charles Ble Goude; and the Patriots for the Total Liberation of Cote d'Ivoire (UPLT-CI) organized several progovernment rallies that drew tens of thousands of marchers (see Section 2.b.). The youth wings of the PDCI and RDR kept a low profile, especially after September 19 but staged some activities during the year.

There were no legal impediments to women assuming political leadership roles. Women held 19 of 225 seats in the National Assembly, with 2 seats vacant in the district of Kong since the disturbances in 2000. The first vice president of the National Assembly was a woman. Women held 6 of the 37 ministerial positions in the cabinet. Four of 41 Supreme Court justices were women. Henriette Dagri Diabate served as Secretary General of the RDR, the party's second ranking position.

There were no legal impediments to the exercise of political rights by the more than 60 ethnic groups in the country. President Gbagbo improved ethnic and regional balance in the Government by including members from 13 different ethnic groups: 10 members of Gbagbo's cabinet were from his own Krou group (Bete, Dida, and Guere); 4 were from the Southern Mande group (Gban, Gouro, and Yacouba) in the western provinces; and 5 ministers were from the north (Malinke and Senoufo). The remaining 18 ministers were from the center, the east, and the south (Baoule, Agni, Attie, Aboure, and Abbey), the ethnic groups that traditionally have been the strongest politically. President Gbagbo's cabinet contained six Muslims.

Section 4 Governmental Attitude Regarding International and Nongovernmental Investigation of Alleged Violations of Human Rights

A number of domestic human rights groups, including LIDHO, MIDH, Justice Action, and the CVCI generally operated without government restriction, investigating and publishing their findings on human rights cases. Government officials generally were cooperative and responsive to their views. The Government occasionally met with some of these groups. There were no credible reports of the Government restricting or prosecuting these groups or their members. Unlike in the previous year, the Government did not investigate NGOs.

During the year, LIDHO, MIDH, and other human rights groups gathered evidence and testimony on events. They also frequently published letters and statements in various independent local daily newspapers, often criticizing state security forces. The Government increased restrictions on press freedoms as a result of the September 19 rebellion (see Section 2.a.). Subsequently, only certain independent daily newspapers would publish LIDHO, MIDH, and CVCI statements and letters. On October 10, two local newspapers carried a MIDH report on human rights violations by the rebels and the Government. The October 20 edition of an independent daily newspaper carried a CVCI statement severely criticizing abuses it stated were committed by the security forces.

International human rights groups, like AI and HRW, generally operated without government restrictions, investigating and publishing their findings on human rights cases. Government officials were generally cooperative and responsive to their inquiries and views. The Government generally cooperated with international inquiries into the post-September 19 human rights situation, authorizing in October inquiries by both AI and HRW. There were no reports of the Government suppressing such groups or denying them visas; however, on occasion the Government has restricted their access to certain sensitive areas. In October HRW was not allowed to approach shantytowns that were being razed. AI reported they were not allowed access to prisons in police or military camps and security forces briefly detained the AI investigators who wanted to interview persons whose homes had been razed in a shantytown.

Local newspapers printed the objections lodged by RSF concerning restrictions placed on the local and international press since the onset of the crisis September 19 (see Section 2.a.).

During the year, the Government regularly permitted access to the World Food Program (WFP), the Red Cross, and other international humanitarian organizations. Both organizations were resident. Eleven U.N. agencies, including the International Labor Organization (ILO), and the World Health Organization (WHO) were resident and active throughout the year.

The Government permitted the publication and dissemination of a U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHRC) communique issued in October that warned against the spread of propaganda that incited hatred and racial discrimination, and called upon the Government to strengthen its commitments to international agreements prohibiting such attitudes. On November 8, the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights called on the Government to pursue the perpetrators of kidnapings, arbitrary detentions, and summary executions.

When President Gbagbo created the national unity Government in early August, he created a Ministry of Human Rights and appointed as Minister a highly regarded attorney and experienced magistrate. After the outbreak of the rebellion, on October 17, she met with the principal human rights organizations, including LIDHO and MIDH, to express the Government's continued concern for human rights, despite the ongoing strife. The Ministry installed a free telephone hotline to allow victims of harassment to inform the appropriate authorities and launched a program of short television messages on human rights. On October 22, in an interview with the government daily newspaper, Fraternite Matin, the Human Rights Minister appealed to both government and rebel forces to respect the internationally agreed human rights standards during wartime.

In October the NGO Group for Research on Democracy and Economic and Social Development (GERDDES-CI) conducted a human rights awareness campaign in response to the events following the uprising. GERDDES formed 6-person teams with Christian and Muslim representatives and members of leading human rights and

democracy groups. The teams met local ethnic, religious, and political leaders in key "front line" districts to hear their concerns and to counsel tolerance. On October 25, President Gbagbo received GERDDES-CI director Honore Guei and other leaders to lend his political support to the project.

Section 5 Discrimination Based on Race, Sex, Disability, Language, or Social Status

The Constitution and the law prohibit discrimination based on race, ethnicity, national origin, sex, or religion; however, in practice women occupied a subordinate role in society. Ethnic discrimination and division were problems.

Women

Representatives of the Ivoirian Association for the Defense of Women (AIDF) stated that spousal abuse (usually wife beating) occurred frequently and often led to divorce. A 1998 AIDF survey found that many women refused to discuss domestic violence; of women who completed the AIDF interviews, nearly 90 percent had been beaten or struck on at least one occasion. Female victims of domestic violence suffered severe social stigma. The courts and police viewed domestic violence as a family problem unless serious bodily harm was inflicted, or the victim lodged a complaint, in which case they could initiate criminal proceedings. However, a victim's own parents often urged withdrawal of a complaint because of the shame that attached to the entire family. The Government did not collect statistics on rape or other physical abuse of women. The Government had no clear policy regarding spousal abuse. The civil code prohibits, and provides criminal penalties for, forced or early marriage and sexual harassment, but contains nothing about spousal abuse.

Women's advocacy groups protested the indifference of authorities to female victims of violence and called attention to domestic violence and FGM. The groups also reported that women victims of rape or domestic violence often were ignored when they attempted to bring the violence to the attention of the police. AIDF and the Republican Sisters, another women's NGO, continued to seek justice on behalf of rape victims but had made no progress by year's end. AIDF ran a house for battered girls and wives, which reportedly received approximately 18 battered women per week. The AIDF also opposed forced marriage and defended the rights of female domestic workers.

FGM was a serious problem. The law specifically forbids FGM and imposes on those who perform it criminal penalties of imprisonment for up to 5 years and a fine of approximately $540 to $3,000 (360,000 to 2 million CFA francs); double penalties apply to medical practitioners. FGM was practiced primarily among the rural populations in the north and west and to a lesser extent in the center. The procedure usually was performed on young girls or at puberty as a rite of passage, with techniques and hygiene that did not meet modern medical standards. According to WHO and the AIDF, as many as 60 percent of women have undergone FGM. Many families from the cities went back to their villages to have their daughters circumcised. The practice was declining in popularity, but persisted in many places. In 2001 approximately 100 girls underwent FGM in the western department of Guiglo.

In July Mrs. Adom Coulibaly, Director of Regulations and Protection at the Ministry of Women's Affairs, led a mission of women NGO leaders and magistrates to several districts of Abidjan to talk about the risks associated with FGM, as well as the legal sanctions imposed on those who practiced it. News that some Yacouba women living in the Abobo section of Abidjan intended to circumcise their daughters prompted the teach-in. On September 24, the Inter Press Service published an article on an excision ceremony in the western town of Gbangbegouine. During the year, the Manh Boya theater group continued its sensitization campaign against FGM and illiteracy in several districts of Abidjan as well as in the north of the country. As a result of the active campaign against FGM undertaken by the Government and NGOs, during 2001 several practitioners were arrested for performing excisions. One woman still was serving a sentence at the MACA for having performed FGM at year's end.

Women from nearby countries sometimes were trafficked to Cote d'Ivoire, including for prostitution (see Section 6.f.).

Prostitution is not illegal as long as it occurred between consenting adults in private. Soliciting and pandering both were illegal and the Morals Squad sometimes enforced the law. Operating an establishment that was mainly for prostitution also was illegal. A local NGO estimated that 58 percent of the women prostitutes in Abidjan were not citizens (see Section 6.f.).

The Constitution and the law prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex; however, women occupied a subordinate role in society. Government policy encouraged full participation by women in social and economic life; however, there was considerable informal resistance among employers to hiring women, whom they considered less

dependable because of their potential pregnancy. Some women also encountered difficulty in obtaining loans, as they could not meet the lending criteria established by banks such as a title to a house and production of a profitable cash crop, specifically coffee and cocoa. Women in the formal sector usually were paid at the same rate as men (see Section 6.e.). In rural areas, women and men divided the labor, with men clearing the land and attending to cash crops such as cocoa and coffee, while women grew vegetables and other staples and performed most household tasks.

Women's advocacy organizations continued to sponsor campaigns against forced marriage, marriage of minors, patterns of inheritance that excluded women, and other practices considered harmful to women and girls. Women's advocacy organizations also campaigned during the year against the legal texts and procedures that discriminated against women. In March during the government-sponsored "Women's Fortnight," women from all regions of the country asked the Government to reform the social security code and to increase the family allowance paid for children. Women criticized the fact that because the tax code did not recognize women as heads of households, female workers frequently paid income tax at a higher rate than their male counterparts. Women also asked that prenatal allowances be exempt from tax, that women and men share parental authority, and that the pensions of deceased salaried women be paid to the widower. No action was taken by year's end.

Children

The Ministries of Public Health and of Employment, Public Service, and Social Security sought to safeguard the welfare of children, and the Government also encouraged the formation of NGOs such as the Abidjan Legal Center for the Defense of Children.

The Government strongly encouraged children to attend school; however, primary education was not compulsory. Primary education was free but usually ended at age 13. Poverty caused many children to leave the formal school system when they were between the ages of 12 and 14. A student who fails the secondary school entrance exams does not qualify for free secondary education. The family must then pay for secondary education, which many cannot afford.

Students who passed entrance exams may elect to attend free public secondary schools. Secondary school entrance was restricted by the difficulty of the exam, which changed each year, and the Government's ability to provide sufficient spaces for all who wished to attend. Many children left school after only a few years. According to government statistics, 57 percent of school age children (ages 6 to 18) attended primary school in the 2000-2001 academic year. According to UNICEF statistics, 62 percent of girls of primary school age reportedly were enrolled in school in 2000, compared with 58 percent in 1996. The percentage of girls attending junior high and high schools was less than 20 percent and 10 percent, respectively. The upward trend in school attendance of girls was attributable to various initiatives over the past 10 years by the Government and international organizations, such as UNICEF and the African Development Bank. The WFP has worked with the Government to establish a countrywide system of school canteens that provided lunches for $.04 (25 CFA francs). The Gbagbo Government abolished the requirement that pupils wear a uniform to primary schools, which is expected to increase female enrollment because school will be cheaper for families. The Government also distributed free books and school supplies in some targeted primary schools.

Parental preference for educating boys rather than girls persisted, particularly in rural areas. Before September 19, primary school enrollment for girls was increasing in the northern part of the country. The Minister of National Education stated that almost one-third of the primary and secondary school dropout rate of 66 percent was attributable to pregnancies, and that many of the sexual partners of female students were teachers, to whom girls sometimes granted sexual favors in return for good grades or money. The penalty for statutory rape or attempted rape of either a girl or a boy aged 15 years or younger was a 1- to 3-year prison sentence and a $150 to $1,500 (100,000 to 1 million CFA francs) fine.

The Ministry of Health operated a nationwide network of clinics for children, infants, and prenatal care (PMI) staffed with nurses and doctors who served the local residents, whether citizens or noncitizens, free or at low cost. The Health Ministry also conducted a nationwide vaccination program for measles, yellow fever, meningitis and other diseases and publicized "well baby" contests. Rotary Clubs sponsored a polio vaccination campaign throughout the country. There were no reported differences in the treatment of boys and girls.

There were large populations of street children in the cities. During the year, the government newspaper, Fraternite Matin, reported 215,000 street children in the country, of whom 50,000 were in Abidjan. According to the AIDF, the BICE (International Catholic Children's Office), the Ministry of Family, Women, and Children's Affairs, and press reports, some children were employed as domestics and were subject to sexual abuse, harassment, and other

mistreatment by their employers (see Section 6.d.). A forum of approximately 15 NGOs, including Children of Africa and the BICE, worked with approximately 8,000 street children in training centers, similar to halfway houses. The NGOs paid the children a small subsistence sum while teaching them vocational and budgeting skills. The Ministry of Family, Women, and Children's Affairs reported that many street children were reluctant to stay in training centers where they earned no money and were subject to strict discipline.

The Ministry of Family, Women, and Children made efforts to reduce the number of children working outside the confines of their own family to curb child abuse (see Section 6.d.).

In some parts of the country, FGM was performed commonly on girls (see Section 5, Women).

Children regularly were trafficked into the country from neighboring countries (see Section 6.f.).

The rebel forces that controlled the northern half of the country used child soldiers who they recruited and armed after September 19. U.N. organizations reported from Bouake and other northern sites that most of the young recruits or volunteers were 17 or 18 years of age; however, there were some who were 15 or younger.

Persons with Disabilities

The law requires the Government to educate and train persons with physical, mental, visual, auditory, and cerebral motor disabilities, to hire them or help them find jobs, to design houses and public facilities for wheelchair access, and to adapt machines, tools, and work spaces for access and use by persons with disabilities. The Government was working to implement these requirements at year's end. Wheelchair accessible facilities for persons with disabilities were not common, and there were few training and job assistance programs for persons with disabilities.

Laws also exist that prohibit the abandonment of persons with mental or physical disabilities and enjoin acts of violence directed at them. Persons with mental disabilities often lived in the streets. Adults with disabilities were not specific targets of abuse, but they encountered serious difficulties in employment and education. The Government supported special schools, associations, and artisans' cooperatives for persons with disabilities, but many persons with physical disabilities begged on urban streets and in commercial zones.

In August following a strike by persons with disabilities demanding increases in their minimal benefits, the Government created a new Ministry for Social Affairs and the Handicapped.

Traditional practices, beliefs, and superstitions varied, but infanticide in cases of serious birth defects was less common than in the past.

National/Racial/Ethnic Minorities

The country's population was ethnically diverse. Citizens born in the country derived from five major families of ethnic groups. The Akan family comprised more than 42 percent of the citizenry; the largest Akan ethnic group, and the largest ethnic group in the country, was the Baoule. Approximately 18 percent of citizens belonged to the northern Mande family, of which the Malinke were the largest group. Approximately 11 percent of citizens belonged to the Krou family, of which the Bete were the largest group. The Voltaic family accounted for another 18 percent of the population, and the Senoufou were the largest Voltaic group. Approximately 10 percent belonged to the southern Mande family, of which the Yacouba were the largest group. Major ethnic groups generally had their own primary languages, and their nonurban populations tended to be concentrated regionally.

All ethnic groups sometimes practiced societal discrimination on the basis of ethnicity. Urban neighborhoods still had identifiable ethnic characteristics, and major political parties tended to have identifiable ethnic and regional bases, although interethnic marriage increasingly was common in urban areas.

At least 26 percent of the population was foreign, and of that group, 95 percent were other Africans. There were more than 5 million West African immigrants living in the country. Most of the Africans were from neighboring countries, with half of them from Burkina Faso. Birth in the country did not automatically confer citizenship.

Some ethnic groups included many noncitizens, while other ethnic groups included few noncitizens. There were societal and political tensions between these two sets of ethnic groups. This cleavage corresponded to some extent to regional differences; ethnic groups that included many noncitizens were found chiefly in the north and west. Members of northern ethnic groups that were found in neighboring countries as well as in the country often

were required to document their citizenship, whereas members of formerly or presently politically powerful ethnic groups of the south and center reportedly were not required to do so. Police routinely abused and harassed noncitizen Africans residing in the country (see Section 1.d.). Official harassment reflected the frequently encountered conviction that foreigners were responsible for high crime rates, as well as a concern for identity card fraud. After the rebellion of September 19, harassment of northerners increased markedly.

The Constitution includes a presidential eligibility clause that limits presidential candidates to those who can prove that both parents were born citizens in the country and states that a candidate never may have benefited from the use of another nationality. Because of this restriction, RDR leader Alassane Ouattara was declared ineligible for both presidential and legislative elections in 2000 (see Section 3). In June a court granted him an Ivoirian certificate of nationality of limited duration.

Over the past decades, many West Africans, especially from the neighboring countries to the north migrated to the country to work on cocoa or fruit plantations or have sought to earn their living in Abidjan and other cities. Outdated or inadequate land ownership laws gave rise to conflicts with an ethnic and antiforeigner aspect.

Ethnic tensions led to fighting and deaths, especially at the time of the July 7 departmental elections (see Section 1.a.). For example, on July 8 in Gagnoa, conflict between members of the Bete ethnic group (President Gbagbo's group) and Dioulas (a general term for persons of northern ethnic groups, whether citizens or noncitizens) left 3 dead and 43 injured. Later in July, Betes and Dioulas youth attacked each other in Daloa, which resulted in 1 dead, 14 injured, several women were raped, and several houses damaged. In early July, Ebrie (from the coastal lagoons) and Dioulas clans clashed in Songon-Agban near Abidjan, injuring 5 persons.

After September 19, President Gbagbo accused "a neighboring country" of being behind the rebellion. The Government razed shantytowns where many poor West African immigrants and citizens lived, rendering as many as 12,000 persons homeless (see Section 1.f.).

On October 6, government television declared that the key to victory over the rebels was to expel all Burkinabe immigrants. In a televised address on October 8, President Gbagbo asked citizens not to attack foreigners. In October government supporters in the western region of Duekoue forced more than 2,000 Burkinabe nationals to leave their cocoa and coffee farms, accused them of being rebel sympathizers, and reportedly killed 11 of them. In late October, the Governments of Burkina Faso and Mali issued statements criticizing the rebellion and urging the Government to stop attacks on their citizens and other foreigners.

Section 6 Worker Rights

a. The Right of Association

The Constitution and the Labor Code grant all citizens, except members of the police and military services, the right to form or join unions. Registration of a new union required 3 months. Two of the three largest labor federations were the General Union of Workers of Cote d'Ivoire (UGTCI) and the Federation of Autonomous Trade Unions of Cote d'Ivoire (FESACI). The third largest federation, Dignite, and one other were not affiliated with the Government. Unions legally are free to join federations other than the UGTCI. In the past, the Government pressured unions to join the UGTCI but no longer does so.

Only a small percentage of the workforce was organized, and most laborers worked in the informal sector that included small farms, small roadside and streetside shops, and urban workshops. However, large industrial farms and some trades were organized. There was an agricultural workers union.

Labor inspectors had the responsibility to enforce a law that prohibits antiunion discrimination. There have been no known prosecutions or convictions under this law, nor have there been reports of antiunion discrimination.

Unions were free to join international bodies, and the UGTCI was affiliated with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.

b. The Right to Organize and Bargain Collectively

The law protects persons working in the formal sector (approximately 1.5 million workers or 15 percent of the workforce) from employer interference in their right to organize and administer unions. The Constitution provides for collective bargaining, and the Labor Code grants all citizens, except members of the police and military

services, the right to bargain collectively. Collective bargaining agreements were in effect in many major business enterprises and sectors of the civil service. In most cases in which wages were not established in direct negotiations between unions and employers, the Ministry of Employment and Civil Service established salaries by job categories (see Section 6.e.).

The Constitution and statutes provide for the right to strike and the Government generally protected that right in practice. However, the Labor Code requires a protracted series of negotiations and a 6-day notification period before a strike may take place, making legal strikes difficult to organize. Workers in the private and government sectors continued to strike over working conditions and terms of employment; however, the Government generally tolerated the strikes, which rarely resulted in violence.

In 2001 the Government asked labor organizations and other "social partners" to abide by a "social truce" to limit strikes or other actions that would slow economic activity while the Government reformed and strengthened institutions. The Labor Ministry arbitrated more than 120 labor conflicts during the year, in spite of the "social truce." Employees could appeal decisions made by labor inspectors to labor courts.

There were several strikes during the year, including by judges (see Section 1.e.). In late January and early February, police in Abidjan went on strike to demand salary equivalency with the gendarmerie. On January 28, a meeting between policemen and the late Interior Minister Boga Doudou ended when a tear gas grenade exploded. It remained unclear who detonated the grenade. After the policemen met with Prime Minister Affi N'Guessan, the two sides resolved the pay dispute, and the policemen returned to work after receiving a compromise wage increase.

When municipal workers went on strike in March to demand the reinstatement of more than 200 dismissed city employees, the Mayor of the Abobo area of Abidjan ordered security forces to break up the protest. After the strike, some of the dismissed employees were rehired.

On June 24, security personnel forcibly broke up a hunger strike by seven of Air Afrique's female workers who complained of not receiving pay for 10 months (like all workers for the defunct air carrier). Security forces arrested the strikers following their unsuccessful meeting with the Transport Minister. All the women were released the same or the next day.

There were no developments in the cases of security forces who forcibly dispersed strikes in 2001 and 2000.

There were no export processing zones.

c. Prohibition of Forced or Bonded Labor

The law prohibits forced or bonded labor, including by children; however, the ILO's Committee of Experts in its annual report for 2000 questioned a decree that places certain categories of prisoners at the disposal of private enterprises for work assignments without their apparent consent. Legislation exists allowing inmates to work outside of prison walls; however, because of a lack of funds to hire wardens to supervise the inmates, the law often was not invoked.

The Government did not enforce the prohibition against forced child labor effectively (see Section 6.f.). Approximately 109,000 child laborers worked in hazardous conditions on cocoa farms in the country in what has been described as the worst forms of child labor (see Section 6.f.); some of these children were forced or indentured workers but 70 percent worked on family farms or with their parents.

d. Status of Child Labor Practices and Minimum Age for Employment

In most instances, the legal minimum working age is 14; however, the Ministry of Employment and Civil Service enforced this provision effectively only in the civil service and in large multinational companies. Labor law limits the hours of young workers, defined as those under the age of 18. However, children often worked on family farms, and some children routinely acted as vendors, shoe shiners, errand boys, and car watchers and washers in the informal sector in cities. There were reliable reports of children laboring in "sweatshop" conditions in small workshops. Children also worked in family operated artisanal gold and diamond mines. Although the Government prohibits forced and bonded child labor, it did not enforce this prohibition effectively (see Section 6.f.).

e. Acceptable Conditions of Work

The Government administratively determined monthly minimum wage rates, which last were adjusted in 1996. During the year President Gbagbo promised a comprehensive pay raise; however, only the police had received an increase by year's end (see Section 6.a.). Minimum wages varied according to occupation, with the lowest set at approximately $52 (36,000 CFA francs) per month for the industrial sector, which was not sufficient to provide a decent standard of living for a worker and family. A slightly higher minimum wage rate applied for construction workers. The Government enforced the minimum wage rates only for salaried workers employed by the Government or registered with the social security office. The majority of the labor force worked in agriculture or in the informal sector where the minimum wage did not apply. According to a Labor Ministry survey, workers in the agricultural and fishing sector received an average of $1,100 (726,000 CFA francs) a year.

Labor federations such as Dignite attempted to fight for just treatment under the law for workers when companies failed to meet minimum salary requirements or discriminated between classes of workers, such as local and foreign workers.

For example, the sanitary services company ASH continued to pay wages as low as $15.50 (12,000 CFA francs) a month to female employees who swept the streets of Abidjan. According to Dignite, labor inspectors continued to ignore this violation of the law. The shipbuilding company Carena continued to discriminate between European engineers who were paid on average $11,400 (8 million CFA francs) a month and their African colleagues who received approximately $114 (80,000 CFA francs) a month. Government labor and employment authorities did not take action in these cases.

Through the Ministry of Employment and the Civil Service, the Government enforced a comprehensive Labor Code that governs the terms and conditions of service for wage earners and salaried workers and provides for occupational safety and health standards. Employees in the formal sector generally were protected against unjust compensation, excessive hours, and arbitrary discharge from employment. The standard legal workweek was 40 hours. The Labor Code requires overtime payment on a graduated scale for additional hours and provides for at least one 24-hour rest period per week.

Working conditions did not improve during the year and, in many cases, continued to decline. Government labor inspectors could order employers to improve substandard conditions, and a labor court could levy fines if the employer failed to comply with the Labor Code. However, in the large informal sector of the economy, the Government enforced occupational health and safety regulations erratically, if at all. The practice of labor inspectors accepting bribes was a growing problem, and observers believed that it was widespread. Workers in the formal sector had the right under the Labor Code to remove themselves from dangerous work situations without jeopardy to continued employment by utilizing the Ministry of Labor's inspection system to document dangerous working conditions. However, workers in the informal sector ordinarily could not absent themselves from such labor without risking the loss of their employment. Several million foreign workers, mostly from neighboring countries, typically worked in the informal labor sector, where labor laws did not apply.

e. Trafficking in Persons

The law does not prohibit trafficking in persons, and although the Government increased its antitrafficking efforts, trafficking in persons was a problem. The Government prosecuted traffickers under existing laws against the kidnaping of children. The country was a source and destination country for women and children.

Law enforcement efforts continued during the year. After the events of September 19, minimal law enforcement continued in government-held territory. The military fronts that divided the country prevented northern workers from reaching the cocoa, coffee, and other rich agricultural zones in the south where labor demand is high. Furthermore, the rebels closed the borders with Mali and Burkina Faso.

During the year, authorities intercepted several persons involved in trafficking. UNICEF had no estimate of the number of children intercepted or repatriated during the year. For example, in February police arrested two Ghanaian nationals for smuggling 7 young girls between the ages of 6 and 19 into the country to work as household servants. Also in February, the police arrested a citizen while trying to transport three Malian children into the country. The children were returned to their parents. In April gendarmes intercepted and arrested 3 citizens in Daoukro while they attempted to transport 15 young girls between the ages of 12 and 14 to work in households in Abidjan. The girls were returned to their families in the area.

In May a citizen of Benin was arrested in Meagui, near the Soubre cocoa region, when authorities discovered 30 persons between the ages of 10 and 30 in his residence. The children said they had been promised jobs paying between $300 and $600 (200,000 and 400,000 CFA francs) per year. Some reported having worked in various

jobs for as long as 4 years without receiving compensation. They eventually were repatriated to Benin by UNICEF.

There were no developments in the trafficking cases from 2001 and 2000.

The Government cooperated with neighboring countries, international organizations, and NGOs to combat trafficking in persons. During the year, the Minister of Employment and the Minister of Family, Women, and Children's Affairs continued working with Malian authorities to prevent crossborder child trafficking and to repatriate Malian children from the country. The Government continued to work with the Governments of Burkina Faso and Togo on an antichild trafficking and repatriation protocol, similar to the agreement with Mali, but no such agreements were signed by year's end. The talks have not been held since the September rebellion broke out. In July 2001, a national committee for the fight against child trafficking was created that included representatives from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Interior, Security and Decentralization, Justice, Labor, Agriculture, Communication, Social Affairs and National Solidarity, and Family, Women, and Children's Affairs. Representatives from several national and international organizations and NGOs, such as UNICEF, REFAMP-CI (network of women ministers and parliamentarians), and the BICE, also were part of the committee. In September the Government and NGOs held a forum in Bouake to highlight the problem of trafficking of young Nigerian girls (often as young as 12 to 15 years of age) to work as prostitutes in urban areas.

The extent of the problem was unknown. The country's cities and farms provided ample opportunities for traffickers, especially of children and women. The informal labor sectors were not regulated under existing labor laws, so domestics, most nonindustrial farm laborers and those who worked in the country's wide network of street shops and restaurants remained outside most government protection.

The regular trafficking of children into the country from neighboring countries to work in the informal sector in exchange for finder's fees generally was accepted. Children were trafficked into the country from Mali, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Togo, Benin, and Mauritania for indentured or domestic servitude, farm labor, and sexual exploitation. There were reports that children, some as young as 6 years of age, were trafficked from Benin to work as agricultural laborers and maids.

Women principally were trafficked to the country from Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia, and Asian countries. A local NGO estimated that 58 percent of the women prostitutes in Abidjan were not Ivoirians and reported that a small number of Ivoirian women were trafficked to Europe and the Middle East for prostitution.

Women and children were trafficked from the country to African, European, and Middle Eastern countries.

The controversy over child labor in the cocoa sector in the country continued, and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the ILO, the Institute of Tropical Agriculture, and the Chocolate Manufacturers' Association financed studies to document the problem. The survey research, released to the Government in July, revealed that most children who were working in the cocoa sector worked on the family's farm (approximately 70 percent) or beside their parents. Others, most frequently the children of extended family members or persons well known to them, indicated their or their family's agreement to leave their respective countries to work on farms in the country to earn money or in search of a better life. The research showed that approximately 109,000 child laborers worked in hazardous conditions on cocoa farms in the country in what the study described as the worst forms of child labor. The studies estimated that 59 percent were from Burkina Faso, 24 percent were citizens, and the others were from Mali or other countries to the north.

In 2001 international media reports exposed the practice of importing and indenturing Malian boys for fieldwork on Ivoirian farms and plantations under abusive conditions. For example, children recruited by Malians in the border town of Sikasso were promised easy and lucrative jobs in the country, transported across the border, and then sold to others who dispersed them throughout the farms and plantations of the central and western regions. According to press reports, some of the trafficked boys were under 12 years of age and were placed in indentured servitude for $140 (100,000 CFA francs) where they worked 12-hour days under grueling conditions for $135 to $190 (95,000 to 125,000 CFA francs) per year and were locked at night in crowded sheds with their clothing confiscated.